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FEBRUARY MEETING, 1906.

THE stated meeting was held on Thursday, the 8th instant, at three o'clock, P. M.; the President in the chair. The record of the last meeting was read and approved; and the customary reports from the Librarian, the Cabinet-Keeper, and the Corresponding Secretary were presented.

Mr. Edward Henry Clement was chosen a Resident Member.

Mr. Nathaniel Paine was appointed to write the memoir of the late Stephen Salisbury for publication in the Proceedings.

The PRESIDENT then read the following paper:

The Society will remember that at our December meeting a letter of resignation of membership was submitted from our associate John Carver Palfrey. The fact that General Palfrey was then suffering from a fatal disease was by me at least unsuspected, and his letter of resignation was a cause of surprise as well as regret. It now, however, appears that it was sent to us in certain anticipation of an event not long to be deferred. General Palfrey died at his house in this city, shortly before sunrise of Monday, January 29.

This Society does not usually include in its Proceedings memoirs of those who, having been members, have resigned their membership. They were omitted in the noticeable cases of George Bancroft and of General Palfrey's father, John Gorham Palfrey. Essentially the historian of New England, no memoir of Dr. Palfrey, so far as I am aware, has ever been prepared, yet of him a memoir is now greatly needed. It had been my hope that General Palfrey would prepare it, and that it might yet be published in our Proceedings; for Dr. Palfrey was a man of high character and of the loftiest moral standards, and the absence of anything which can be described as an authorized or detailed biography is in his case much to be regretted; nor is the deficiency likely now ever to be made good. For more than twenty-five years a member of the Society, his first resignation was due to that supersensitiveness

on his part, or perhaps it might be better described as over-conscientiousness, which more than once stood in the path of his success in life. At one period, it will be remembered, he was Secretary of the Commonwealth. As such, he became satisfied that a large portion of the so-called Hutchinson Papers, then in the possession of the Society, were in reality the property of the Commonwealth. They had been borrowed from the archives in the old State House by Governor Thomas Hutchinson, for use in preparing his History of Massachusetts. When Hutchinson's house was ransacked and wrecked by the mob, August, 1765, these papers, in common with all his other collections, were, as is well known, wantonly destroyed or scattered. Many of them, picked up in the streets, fell fortunately into the possession of Rev. John Eliot, one of the original members of our Society. By him they were long afterward given to us, and some of them are still in our possession. Dr. Palfrey felt it his duty to reclaim these papers on behalf of the Commonwealth. Naturally, some of those interested in the Society were unwilling to part with what had so long been an undisputed possession of the most precious character, and Dr. Palfrey considered that an issue between himself and the Society had thus been created. In his superconscientious estimation a proper spirit of self-respect exacted that he should not be on both sides of a controversy. He therefore resigned from our Society. This was in 1838; subsequently, in 1842, he was re-elected, only again to resign in April, 1854. Political controversy was then rife, and in the contentions of that period Dr. Palfrey was conspicuously identified with what in this Society as then constituted was distinctly the unpopular side. Again the sensitiveness of the wellnigh morbidly conscientious man asserted itself; and the coming historian *par excellence* of New England withdrew from his membership in the Massachusetts Historical Society. Hence no memoir of him enriches our Proceedings.

Recurring to his second son, just dead, our late associate was chosen into the Society at the December meeting of 1902. His brother, General Francis Winthrop Palfrey, it will be remembered, had been a member from 1873 until his death, in December, 1889. A memoir of him is included in our Proceedings.

Personally, General Palfrey was one of my oldest friends.

In fact, I cannot remember a time when I did not know him, and know him familiarly. My earliest recollections of him are thus of more than sixty years ago ; and from boyhood to the time of his death, at more than the allotted age of man, his characteristics underwent no considerable change. From early youth, all through maturity to a ripe age, they were essentially of the sterling type. Like his father, he was severely conscientious. His sense of duty and obligation was pronounced, and a law unto him. What he deemed right, that he did ; nor could anything deflect him from what he saw as the straight line of conduct. To him might very fairly be applied Charles Lamb's words descriptive of one of those Inner Temple characters whom he, as Elia, immortalized : " He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and ' would strike.' " Unpretentious, shy, perhaps unduly conscious of self and of his own limitations, he moved through life with a sort of military precision. Not a born soldier, nor originally designed for the soldier calling, as a Boston boy, the son of his father, he went, in due course and at the prescribed age, to the public Latin School. Entering that school in 1844, when it found its local habitation in that markedly dreary building, with its formal granite front, on Bedford Street, he was there five years ; and to him as to my elder brother, his classmate, five very disagreeable years those were. He was sent up to take examination for admission to Harvard in 1849, and was graduated in the Class of '53, — the class of President Eliot, — a class which, first and last, has furnished seven members to this Society. While in his senior year, Lorenzo Sabine, the member of Congress from the Middlesex District, had the gift of an appointment to West Point. He nominated to it Dr. Palfrey's son, Dr. Palfrey having represented the district in the Thirtieth Congress ; and after some deliberation the appointment was accepted. Even then, however, it was not the intention of J. C. Palfrey to adopt the army as a life profession. Having a natural aptitude for mathematics, — what might be described as an orderly, arithmetical mind, — his purpose rather was to obtain the best possible training as an engineer, and thereafter to devote himself to that as a civil calling.

The cadets of West Point are generally young men, in many cases having but very imperfect preparation for academic life ;

nor has it been usual for those who have graduated after a full course at Harvard to enter the Academy. Young Palfrey therefore went to West Point exceptionally well prepared, especially in mathematics, and at an age more advanced than was usual. It is a somewhat humorous fact, and curiously illustrative of what may be called the "outs" of the examination test, that, though the entrance requirements for West Point are of a most elementary character, it was for a time very questionable whether Palfrey would succeed in passing them. He had got too far beyond that sort of thing. Nevertheless, he did scrape into the Academy; and, once there, with his admirable preparation and studious and regular temperament, he soon established himself at the head of his class, and there remained until, first in rank, he left the Academy to become an officer of the corps of Topographical Engineers. This was in 1857. His subsequent military history is to be found in the Biographical Register of West Point Officers and Graduates (Vol. II. p. 447). Immediately upon graduation he was appointed to duty as assistant in the work of repairs and construction then in progress on the various fortifications along the coast of Maine and New Hampshire, and so served until the breaking out of the War of Secession in 1861. Subsequently he was assigned to engineer duty in the Department of the Gulf, and was stationed at Ship Island while the expedition under General Butler was organized. He then took part in the capture of New Orleans. He was in charge of the construction and repair of the fortifications about New Orleans, and of the fieldworks of the Department of the Gulf, until he took the field in the Red River campaign as Assistant Engineer of the Military Division of West Mississippi. He directed the engineering work at the siege and capture of Forts Gaines and Morgan, and of Mobile. He was brevetted Major in August, 1864, and in 1865 was made Lieutenant-Colonel of Volunteers. Finally, he closed his active services as Brevet-Colonel and Brigadier-General of the United States Army. He obtained leave of absence in October, 1865, and his resignation from the army took effect May 1, 1866. His services, covering a period of eight years, four passed in active warfare, were valuable as well as laborious, but they were of the solid, unassuming description characteristic of the man and of that branch of our army organization to which his high academic

rank assigned him. He never sought, probably never desired, active field service in the immediate command of large bodies of troops, — such command as was obtained during the stirring time that followed by many of his classmates, both Confederate and Union, notably by Generals E. P. Alexander and Kirby Smith, George C. Strong, Marcus A. Reno, and John S. Marmaduke, — names inseparably associated with brilliant operations in the Civil War. None the less Palfrey did his duty effectively in the positions assigned him.

Returning to civil life in the spring of 1866, he became agent of the Merrimack Manufacturing Co., of Lowell, Mass., having accepted that appointment the previous October, and familiarized himself with its duties during the six months' leave of absence which closed his connection with the army. He remained at Lowell nine years, until the summer of 1874; in July of that year resigning his position with the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, he became treasurer of the Manchester Mills. At this time he married a daughter of the late Samuel R. Payson, of Boston. He was treasurer of the Manchester Mills for seventeen years, at the close of which, in October, 1891, his active business life terminated.

To the end General Palfrey maintained his interest in the military operations of the great struggle in which he had been concerned; and it was in this field that he did that historical work which subsequently led to his becoming a member of our Society. His papers related almost entirely to military episodes in which he himself had taken a part, and concerning which he was thoroughly informed. They were therefore of real historical value. His writing was characteristic of the man and his mental make-up, — straightforward, solid, to the point, showing absolute honesty of thought and a complete mastery of his subject. Conscientiously exact, devoid of unnecessary ornament, he went every time to the heart of his theme. I will more especially specify the following papers which appeared in the publications of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, or in the columns of the *New York "Nation"*: — one on the Siege of Yorktown, written in 1878, and published in the first volume of the Military Historical Society's papers; another, on the Siege of Port Hudson, read to the same Society in April, 1891; further papers also on the Siege of Yorktown, General McClellan's Plans after the Fall



of Yorktown, on the Capture of Mobile, and on the Assault on Port Hudson. After the war General Palfrey was elected a member of the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Society, and for many years he was one of the Visiting Board of Thayer School of Dartmouth College.

Chosen into this Society somewhat late in life, and a member of it for only three years, though frequently seen at our meetings, General Palfrey, I regret to say, never took an active or prominent part in our discussions, nor does any contribution from his pen appear in our Proceedings. This is much to be regretted. But what was our loss was the gain of the sister Military Historical Society of Massachusetts.

Born in Boston, December 25, 1833, at the time of his death General Palfrey was in his seventy-third year. A man, as I have already said, of inflexible honesty, through an active life extending over forty-five years he did his work well, and in absolute conformity with the line of duty as he saw it; and his ideals of duty and of obligation were high. He leaves two sons to perpetuate a name very distinguished in that field of historical research more peculiarly ours.

Hon. Samuel A. Green read a letter from Hon. JOHN BIGELOW, senior Corresponding Member of the Society, and showed the photographs mentioned in it:

21 GRAMERCY PARK, N. Y.,
January 16, 1906.

DR. SAMUEL A. GREEN,

Librarian of the Mass. Historical Society.

DEAR SIR,— With this note I send you two photographs of a statuette of Franklin which was commended to my attention in a letter, of which the following is a copy, that I received in the spring of 1904, from Madame Guérin de Vaux, its possessor.

18 RUE PIERRE CHARRON XVI,
PARIS, the 10th March.

DEAR MR. BIGELOW,— I am most happy that the photo I could send you was found interesting, and I shall be very satisfied to see reproduced in print an object which is for me a family heirloom.

My father, Mr. Fournier des Orvres, was indeed the great-grandson of Fournier le Jeune, who was a great printer and possessed much knowledge, born in 1712, died in 1768. My father was the last to bear his name; my sister Mme. de Thore and I are his direct descendants.

Fournier le Jeune was very intimate with Franklin. At the time of my birth, there still existed letters which they had exchanged, and particularly the one which had accompanied the sending of the statue. Unhappily they have been lost since, and I am sorry to be unable to send you any written proof of their relations.

The name of the author is unknown.

Other reproductions of the statue possibly exist, as I know for certain that some statues of the same kind have been sometimes made — several in number. I know indeed two statuettes of Voltaire of the same type and which are like each other (Mr. d'Allemagne's collection and Musée Carnavalet in Paris). These statues are made of a white paste, gesso or other composition; they have been moulded and painted. The hair of the one we possess is certainly real hair of the great Franklin, which has been stuck; the letter I named before mentioned it. The connoisseur Mr. d'Allemagne declares them of German workmanship.

Regretting to be incapable to give you no better clue concerning the object you pursue, I remain

Yours sincerely,

GUÉRIN DE VAUX.

These pictures have never been in commerce, and the only one of them which has ever been published — that giving the side view of Franklin — appeared for the first time, and only, in the fifth edition of my *Life of Franklin*, published in April last. You will agree with me, I think, in regarding these photographs, taken from the only plate ever made of the original, as not only a striking likeness of one of our most distinguished men, but also a work of art of no ordinary merit.

While in Paris last summer I took occasion to visit the two statuettes of Voltaire referred to by Madame de Vaux as possibly being the work of the same sculptor. Of these I send you also photographs, by which I think you will readily agree with me that while the one in the Musée Carnavalet is unquestionably by the same artist as the Franklin, and was wrought in the same atelier with precisely the same accessories; the other was wrought in a different atelier, with entirely different accessories, and by a very inferior artist. M. Henri d'Allemagne, its proprietor, told me that he bought it in Germany — I think in Hamburg — and deemed it to be probably the work of a German, and also the work of the same artist that wrought the Voltaire in the Musée Carnavalet. Neither Madame de Vaux, the Directors of the Musée Carnavalet, nor M. d'Allemagne had any information or offered any con-
jec-

tures as to the author of either of these works. This was largely due, I presume, to the fact that neither of them knew much if anything more about Franklin than his name.

I was not long in reaching the conclusion that Madame de Vaux's statuette of Franklin and the Carnavalet statuette of Voltaire were the work of Nini, an Italian, whose medallions, as you doubtless are well aware, are among the most famous of his period; and that none among them are more valued by connoisseurs and collectors than his medallions of Franklin. I will briefly state the grounds of my faith.

Jean Baptiste Nini was a native of Urbino in Italy, and was born in 1716, one year after the death of Louis the Fourteenth. He died in 1786. The latter half of his life he resided in France. When about forty years of age, he established himself in the humble village of Chaumont. Le Ray de Chaumont, while Intendant of the Hôtel Royal des Invalides, acquired the seigneurie of Chaumont, on which he discovered a remarkably fine quality of clay for artistic purposes. He also discovered in Nini, who had already acquired reputation as an engraver on glass, peculiar talents for utilizing that clay. He attached Nini to him on a salary of twelve hundred francs a year, with lodging, heat, and light. Nini began there with engraving on glass and in amusing himself in reproducing on glass the compositions of Boucher. The remarkable plasticity of the clay at Chaumont at length led him to turn his attention to medallions, which he baked in a pottery established on the estate, and which were put on the market at the moderate price of twenty sols (cents) apiece. In 1778, as this business with his fame extended, Nini became Director (*Régisseur*) of the establishments founded at Chaumont by Le Ray, as his patron was usually called. This position he retained until his death.

During Franklin's entire sojourn in Paris he occupied a house on the estate at Passy of Mrs. Le Ray, Chevalier Seigneur de Chaumont-sur-Loire et autres lieues, Conseiller du Roy en ses Conseils, Grand Maître Honoraire des Eaux et Forêts, Intendant de l'Hôtel Royal des Invalides y dem't. Paroisse Saint Louis—for it took all these titles to describe him properly in his contract with Nini; and it was through Le Ray that Franklin, until recognized as Minister of the United States, held what intercourse he had with the government of

France. Their relations therefore were of the most intimate character. He necessarily fell into correspondingly intimate relations with Nini, who appears to have found him his most profitable model.

The most recent and the most detailed account of this eccentric artist¹ gives the record of one hundred and nine of his medallions, sixty of which are in the Collection of the late Prince A. de Broglie. There are nine medallions of Franklin alone, and five of these belong to the De Broglie collection. None of the eminent sitters of Nini are represented by half as many pieces as Franklin; yet among these were Maria Theresa of Austria; her daughter, Marie Antoinette, Queen of France; three of Louis XV.; Louis XVI.; Duc de Berry; the Empress Catharine of Russia; Voltaire; Le Ray de Chaumont and Thérèse his wife; the Count de Caylies; Charles III. of Spain; and three heads in one medallion of Nini himself, his wife and daughter.

The resources of Nini's genius are nowhere better illustrated than in the variety of his portraitures of Franklin. Four of these portraits have the same features, but their dates and legends are different. They have in some sort the air of being official portraits of the Savant and the Statesman. Others represent him in a more intimate and familiar guise. In one he wears a fur cap, the reproduction of which has made his features universally known. Another in all respects similar, but much rarer, shows him with spectacles on his nose. This differs from the first two in the coiffure. The fur cap is exchanged for a long bonnet of liberty, like those worn by the Neapolitan fishermen.

It deserves to be remarked here that in the statuette at the Carnavalet Museum, obviously the work of the same artist as that of the Franklin, Voltaire's head is covered with a Liberty Cap, showing that it was a kind of head dress which the artist was fond of using with sitters like Voltaire and Franklin, whose political principles would permit him to use it occasionally.

The medallion of Franklin in the fur bonnet is quite the most widespread of Nini's work. It was sent to the United States by thousands in barrels. Some of these barrels have

¹ Jean-Baptiste Nini: *Sa Vie, Son Œuvre*, 1717-1786; A Storelli. Tours: Imprimerie A. Mame et fils, 1896.

since his death been found at Chaumont and some at Nantes. They had never progressed farther towards their destination.

Nini spent fourteen years of his life at Chaumont, and they covered all the years of Franklin's official residence in France. Nothing could have been more natural than for Franklin to be drawn into close relations with Fournier le Jeune, who was unquestionably the most original and the most famous type-founder that France has ever produced, — obeying the same laws of attraction which had bound him in intimate relations with William Strahan, a leading printer in England during his residence there, — and nothing more natural than that Franklin should have presented to Fournier le Jeune the statuette which is now the priceless inheritance of Madame de Vaux.

Franklin left Paris in 1785, the year before Nini's death. During the previous nine years Nini made more medallions of Franklin than of any other person, and must therefore have come into such relations with him as could scarcely fail to have been familiar if not intimate, and which at least dispel any improbability of this statuette being his work; for Nini was a dwarf, barely four feet in height. He was original to eccentricity; he was fond of good cheer and dreaded the cold. His dress was exceedingly conspicuous and was worn in a way to give his person a most bizarre and grotesque appearance. He cultivated nails excessively long. When once asked if they had anything to do with his success as an artist, he drew from a shabby *armoire à psalterion* — a sort of harp or zither — on which he played delightfully with his nails. It is not surprising that a person who was in so many ways such an exception to his species should have amused himself in leisure moments by making these statuettes of sitters like Voltaire and Franklin, who were intelligent enough to appreciate his genius and wise enough to appear blind to his peculiarities.

If circumstantial evidence alone can ever prove anything, I think I have said enough to settle conclusively the authorship of this statuette and its value as a memorial of Franklin. This presumption is strengthened by the fact that no one has suggested or can suggest the name of any other artist whose relations with Franklin or with Nini would justify even a suspicion that either of these statuettes was his work.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN BIGELOW.

Mr. FRANKLIN B. SANBORN read parts of the following paper:

St. John de Crèveœur, the American Farmer (1735-1813).

Thirty-two years ago, at the February meeting of this Society in 1874, its honored President, the late R. C. Winthrop, submitted from the Bowdoin Papers in his possession four letters from St. John de Crèveœur, once so well known in this city, in New York, and all over Europe as "The American Farmer." They were sent to Governor Bowdoin in the years 1786-1788, three of them from France and the last from New York, where he was then French consul, and were written in English, as was the first series of the "Letters of an American Farmer," which first appeared in London in 1782. In the letter of October 21, 1786, St. John said:—

"A second edition of the A. F's letters, with a 3rd vol., will soon appear, of which I shall not fail to send your Excellency an Exemplary, to whom I expect personally to present in June next the unfeigned Respect and consideration wherewith I have the Honor to be your Excellency's

"Most Humble Servant."

He had previously, in a letter to Bowdoin from Caen in Lower Normandy (his birthplace) of July 1, 1786, announced this French edition of the "Farmer's Letters," and the fact that a third volume was to be added. The first French edition, varying considerably from the London edition, had appeared in two volumes in 1784.

Now, who was this Frenchman who for so many years passed as an American, and of whom neither Mr. Winthrop nor Professor Barrett Wendell knew the true name, date of birth, or his whole remarkable story? Mr. Winthrop was excusable in this want of knowledge, since the copious biography of St. John de Crèveœur by his great-grandson, Robert St. John de Crèveœur, was not published in Paris until 1883; but it has long been in three of our neighboring libraries, including that of Harvard University, and might easily have been consulted by any historian of our American Revolution or its literature. If so consulted, it would have corrected those errors of name and date, extent of authorship, etc., which have been perpetuated in this country for a century up to 1904.

Michel Guillaume St. Jean de Crèveçœur, who at the age of fifty found himself famous under his assumed English name of "Hector St. John," was born at Caen, January 31, 1735, the son of a Norman gentleman whose ancestors had fought, long before, by the name of St. Jean, under a Rohan, and waited at the court of Margaret of Valois, but in the eighteenth century had settled into civil employments at Caen, and acquired the title of De Crèveçœur from ownership of the small fief of that name in the district of Troarn in the present Department of Calvados. St. John's father was called, by courtesy, Marquis de Crèveçœur, and had his country-seat at Pierpont, near Ver, not far from the seacoast, in another part of Calvados. He had a town house in Caen, and there his eldest son was born and put to school at the Jesuit college on the hill (Du Mont).

There he got hard fare and sound Latin, lodging in a cold north room; for he told his children that it was there, while sleepless in the winter cold, that he first identified the pole-star which in later years guided him in the Canadian forests. His uncle, Jacques de Crèveçœur, had married a lady named Mutel, whose sister lived at Salisbury in England, and to her he was sent, for some cause yet unknown (perhaps a school escapade), to complete his education. Whether he returned to Normandy before sailing for America is also unknown. There is a tradition that he was in Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755, and he declared that he was in Canada before he was twenty,—that is, in the earthquake year. However, his exact career between the beginning of our French and Indian war and his naturalization as a citizen of New York in 1764, was never fully narrated, and he may have had some reason for concealing parts of it. As a French Canadian he made explorations among the savages west and southwest of Montreal, and took part in the war against us as an officer (probably of engineers) in a regiment under Vaudreuil and Montcalm.

He had acquired in England a knowledge of mathematics, and apparently the skill of a land surveyor and draughtsman; for his first employment at Quebec was the drawing of a large map of the French possessions. In pursuing this work he seems to have made a long, hazardous journey west and south, perhaps as far as to the Ohio River near West Virginia. This may have been in 1755–1756. There is in the War Office at

Paris a manuscript map of Canada and the northern English colonies, dated 1758, and appearing to be St. John's work. At any rate, he was a lieutenant in 1757-1758 of the Canadian regiment of Sarre; and the "Gazette de France" (March 8, 1759) said:—

"Bougainville, aide of the Marquis de Montcalm in Canada, has reported to the King the general situation in Canada, and has had the honor to present a plan of the forts and a map of the places that are the scene of war in that country. These were drawn by the Sieur de Crèveœur, an officer in the Sarre regiment, now employed engineering; he has made much repute by his talent and courage."¹

A doubt is thrown over the statement that the "Gazette's" "Sieur de Crèveœur employé dans le génie" was our St. John, by the fact that in writing to Dr. Franklin from Caen, September 26, 1781, the latter, newly arrived in Normandy from England, said:—

"I am so great a stranger to the manners of this my native country, (having quitted it very young) that I never dreamt I had any other than the old family name of St. John,—a name as ancient as the Conquest of England by William the Bastard. I was greatly astonished when at my late return [August, 1781], I saw myself under the necessity of being called by that of Crèveœur."

In favor of the two Crèveœurs being the same youth is the fact that St. John, in his "Journey in Upper Pennsylvania," published at Paris in French in 1801, says (Vol. I. p. 337), speaking of the so-called massacre of Fort William Henry in 1757, that he himself was present. After relating a talk he had with a Pottawatomie chief, Kanna-Satego, in which the Indian defended not only the killing but the eating of captured enemies, St. John says:—

"Such ferocious savages attacked the English garrison at Fort William Henry, who, agreeably to the capitulation of their Colonel,

¹ Against this identification of our subject with the map-maker is the fact that the latter registered himself, when assigned to the company of Rumigny in the regiment of the Sarre, as born in the parish of St. Eustache at Paris, January 6, 1738, while our St. John was certainly born at Caen nearly three years earlier. But dates were never St. John's forte. He misstated the ages of his children by two years, and dedicated the French edition of his "Lettres d'un Cultivateur Américain" to Lafayette from "Albany, 17 Mai 1781," though at that date he was in England.

Monro, were marching to Fort Edward without arms. They scalped a great number of these soldiers, some of whom were cut up and put into their kettles. I have heard an officer serving under the Marquis Montcalm relate all the details of this frightful butchery."

In a manuscript comment on this statement St. John says this French officer was himself. How he occupied the time from 1758 until he turns up in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, about 1762, is hard to say. His biographer says he did not return to France with the remains of the defeated Canadian army in 1760, although his name still stands on the regimental list of the Sarre regiment during the campaigns of Montcalm in 1758-1759. There are some indications that he was in Normandy between 1760 and 1763, for his name is said to be on the list of an agricultural society of Caen in 1763. M. Lahr, who published the Proceedings of that Society in 1827, called St. John one of its first members, about 1763. To this his biographer replies: "M. Lahr must have made a mistake. St. John was then in America, hardly established as a farmer, and certainly not so well known as to take part, even as a correspondent, in a society which included the most distinguished men of his native city." From the fact that he speaks of having been early familiar with the northern parts of Vermont, wherein afterwards three new towns, St. Johnsbury, Vergennes, and Danville, were named for himself and his French patrons, it has been conjectured that he left Canada before the surrender of Quebec, and came into the region of Vermont and the upper Hudson valley, whence he soon found his way to the Quakers of Pennsylvania and Delaware. He was employed, probably as a land surveyor, at Shippensburg, near Carlisle, and made many acquaintances in Pennsylvania. He bought land in Sussex County, New Jersey, not far from the border of Orange County; but after his marriage to Mehitabel Tippet, in 1769, he established himself on a farm near Cornwall, New York, which was called by him "Pine Hill," and which he often describes in his books. He occupied this farm from 1770 to April 19, 1779; but he by no means confined himself to it, nor to the larger limits of Orange and Sussex counties. He had before this made long excursions into the Indian wilderness; and in the few years before the Declaration of Independence he had visited Maryland, Virginia, much of Pennsylvania as it was then inhabited, and a portion of

New England, particularly Nantucket, which he was the first European to describe poetically. He was indeed what the French mean by a poet, — a person who looks at life through the medium of sensibility and fancy rather than in the dry light of common sense. He therefore exaggerated naturally, and without intention to deceive; for whatever he saw he saw clearly and whatever he felt he felt forcibly; and this combination of clear perception and vivid feeling gave both form and color to his descriptions.

According to Lacretelle, who in 1783–1784 introduced him as an author to Frenchmen, St. John's habit was to note down each day, as he journeyed about, the observations he made and the conversations he heard; and this he did always in English. Lacretelle said: —

“Having adopted in youth a country which was English, he devoted himself wholly to the language of that country. He read and he wrote in that tongue, so that his native language became to him a foreign tongue. You have already heard that this author and translator is M. St. Jean de Crèvecoeur, born a French gentleman, who passed twenty-four years of his life in North America. This French translator and English author writes in our language with an English freedom and originality in his choice of subjects. Not that I call that a defect which French readers may find odd in his style, and so ask pardon for it; no, it seems to me that this tone (a little quaint) will please in a work that must interest us more by its simplicity than its elegance.”

It will here be noticed that Lacretelle shortens St. John's American life by three years, for the author himself claimed twenty-seven American years. As he sailed from New York for Ireland September 1, 1780, and could not well have got to Canada till late in 1754, — and indeed there is no certain trace of him there before 1757, — it may be that Lacretelle was more exact than St. John himself, and that the young Frenchman spent some time in Holland and Portugal before visiting Montreal and the Indians to the southwest of that capital. The family tradition was that St. John touched at Lisbon on his way to Canada, and there saw the ruin caused by the great earthquake of November, 1755. In the unpublished English manuscript of the “American Farmer's Letters,” was a story called “The Rock of Lisbon,” in which the author speaks of a considerable stay made by him in Portugal, after the earthquake, but at an unfixed date. “This letter,” says

his biographer, "was afterwards made over into a romantic episode of the 'Journey in Pennsylvania' (1801), II. 275." But, as he also speaks of being employed at Quebec some time in 1755, making maps, the Portuguese adventure is left doubtful.¹

However he may have got there, St. John at the age of twenty-nine had himself naturalized, in 1764, as a citizen of New York, and a few months after he took up "the old farm of Greycourt" (May 2, 1764), wherever it may have been, — for it was not the Pine Hill farm, and may have been on the confines of New Jersey. This was five years before his marriage, and probably before he had property enough to support a wife. He describes so well the work of clearing up a new farm, and the habits of life incident thereto, that he must have seen it going on for some years. In his last work, just cited, (Vol. I. pp. 267–281) we have an account given by his good friend Colonel Woodhull, then at the age of forty-nine, of *his* experience in turning the Orange County wilderness into good farms. Of these Colonel Woodhull possessed far more than St. John ever did, namely, fifteen hundred acres, of which seven hundred and forty-eight were cultivated. He had been thirty-one years bringing them into cultivation, — interrupted, however, by a voyage of mercantile adventure to Surinam. Returning discontented from that tropical country, Woodhull found that his father, living on Long Island, had carried on the work of clearing up the Orange County wilderness and had also selected a wife for Jesse. Obediently marrying her, he was now the father of nine children, for whom he was providing farms, after the Revolution, in which he had taken part as colonel of militia. He was also sheriff of the county; but his chief work was that of farming on a large scale; making maple sugar from his own sugar-orchard, bayberry-tallow candles from the fruit of bushes on the mountain-side near by, and hundreds of yards of woollen, linen, and cotton cloth, spun and woven in his own houses. Colonel Woodhull,

¹ The mixture of truth and fiction in St. John's books is quite perplexing to the reader at first; and so well is the fiction managed, mostly in the Defoe style of realism, that it is hard to say where the short story ends and the true report begins. Much of the later book is taken up with short novels like the tale of Juan de Braganza; which is highly improbable, yet humanly possible, and accompanied with much detail of real life. St. John grew prolix in these later volumes, and does not seem to have had many readers.

of whom we shall hear more in connection with Fanny St. John, had a brother, an instructor in Yale College, whose farming in Connecticut was still more remarkable. According to the Colonel, —

“My brother has a small plantation not far from the College, where, by force of his science and perseverance, he has united all the useful and agreeable products of the whole country. You might say his garden and farm are an epitome of the continent. Once a year he gives a great dinner to his president and colleagues, which he calls by a Greek name that I forget. His table-cloth is made from some cotton-plants that he raises; the napkins are bordered in blue stripes, colored with indigo, of which he annually makes two or three ounces. . . . I will not dwell on the meats, vegetables, and fruits which come from his barn and poultry-yard and kitchen-garden; his maple-sugar, oil of sesame, peach-brandy, maple-vinegar and syrup, cider, metheglin, cherry-wine, confectionery, Labrador tea, etc. All, even the coffee, comes from his fields, his garden or his greenhouse, — all, even his bayberry candles. But what will surprise you more is the punch with which he regales them. The acid of this drink comes also from his garden. Some years ago, traversing our woods, I discovered this charming fruit-shrub; it bears berries large as a pigeon’s egg, of the loveliest red, filled with a transparent juice of the same color, which our doctors say is as good as the lemon-juice from Jamaica or Bahama: its taste is that of the swamp-cranberry.”

I suspect a little exaggeration here, as there often is in St. John’s account of things American; he sees the real thing, but it gets exalted in his imagination before he describes it. Colonel Woodhull mowed one hundred acres of grass; his haying-time lasted six weeks; his household comprised thirty-five persons, whom he must feed and clothe. St. John himself had managed a smaller household some miles nearer the Hudson, on his Pine Hill farm. But he did not build his log-cabin there until 1770, and afterwards a better “frame-house” of which he made a water-color sketch, with the landscape about it, still kept by his descendants in France, who also have a good profile portrait of him. Soon after the birth of his oldest child, a girl named Fanny, he went in 1772 to make a long visit among the Quakers of Nantucket, and described their community and whale-fishery at much length.

It has pleased some critics, who never took the trouble to read St. John thoroughly, or with due care for what they did

read, to speak of his pictures of American rural life and political opportunity as wanting in actuality, — comparing him to men far more brilliant, who did not take the pains to observe carefully and control one observation by another. On the contrary, I find that the remarkable skill in generalization which is the French intellectual quality most noticeable, was in his case based on a multitude of observations and researches, as repeated and exhaustive as those which a German professor undertakes in his most thorough inquiries. The chapters on Nantucket are perhaps the best single instance of this combination of the observer and the analytic generalizer in a single person. Precisely what took St. John to that barren sand-bank in the open ocean is unknown; but finding himself there, he seems to have said to himself: —

“Here is a new problem in American life. The unlimited freedom of opportunity, the surprising kindness of Nature are here wanting. I can account for the speedy transformation of the peasant from the Palatinate or the Hebrides into the self-directing, self-respecting Pennsylvania farmer; but what brought these Quakers to this narrow and desert habitation, and built up for them a dense community of wealth and equality? Let me look into this.”

And he did so. Reasoning that a small example, well sifted and tested, is better than a cursory glance at the whole wide field of American colonization, he sought, as he declares, “for some small, unnoticed corner.” He found it in Nantucket. He says: —

“Numberless settlements, each distinguished by some peculiarities, present themselves on every side. Here they live by fishing on the most plentiful coasts in the world; there they fell trees, beside large rivers, for masts and lumber; here others convert innumerable logs into the best boards; there, again, others cultivate the land, rear cattle, and clear large fields. Yet I have a spot in my view where none of these occupations is performed, — barren in its soil, insignificant in extent, inconvenient in situation, deprived of materials for building. It seems to have been inhabited merely to prove what mankind can do when happily governed. There I meet with barren spots fertilized, grass growing where none grew before; grain gathered from fields which had hitherto produced nothing better than brambles; dwellings raised where no building materials were to be found, and wealth acquired by the most uncommon means. Who would imagine that any people should have abandoned a fruitful and extensive continent, replete with

good soil, enamelled meadows, rich pastures, every kind of timber, and with all other materials to render life happy and comfortable, — to come and inhabit a little sand-bank, to which nature had refused those advantages? This island has nothing deserving of notice but its inhabitants. Their freedom, their skill, their probity and perseverance have accomplished everything, and brought them by degrees to the rank they now hold."

Here, then, was the place to test the principles that made colonial life in America prosperous; and St. John notes everything down very carefully, and reports it with substantial accuracy. In so doing he digresses a little to make a remark on the difference between the Quaker settlements in the mild winters of North Carolina, and the long and cold Maine winters; and what he says has been fully verified by the experience of a century and a quarter. In 1766 the Nantucket Quakers had planted a colony at the head of Deep River, North Carolina, in "a fertile and bewitching country," while others had settled on the Kennebec in Maine. St. John then says:—

"Were I to begin life again, I would prefer the country of Kennebec to the other, however bewitching. If the latter exceeds in the softness of its climate, the fecundity of its soil, and a greater variety of products from less labor, it does not breed men equally hardy, nor so capable to encounter dangers and fatigues. It leads too much to idleness and effeminacy. On the Kennebec the constant healthiness of the climate, the happy severities of the winter, always sheltering the earth with a voluminous coat of snow, and the equally happy necessity of labor, — all these reasons would greatly preponderate against the softer situations of Carolina, where mankind reap too much, do not toil enough, and enjoy too fast the benefits of life. The Kennebec will always be a country of health, labor, and strong activity; characteristics of society which I value more than greater opulence and voluptuous ease."

St. John had tried the more severe winters of Canada, and knew whereof he spoke; he also knew and abhorred negro slavery, of which only a mild form existed in New York where he settled. His account of the coming on of winter in the Mohawk valley would apply as well to the valley of the Kennebec. It did not come out in the English edition of his "Farmer's Letters," but appeared six years later in the first

volume of the Paris edition of 1787 (pp. 289 *et seq.*), and is almost as graphic as Emerson's "Snowstorm,"

"Announced by all the trumpets of the sky":

"Among the characteristics of our climate, none is more striking than the beginning of our winters, and the vehemence with which their first rigor descends upon the earth. It comes down from Heaven, and becomes one of Heaven's chief favors. What should we do but for the immense body of our useful snows? It is due to them that we can gather abundantly the crops we raise. This deluge of congealed water, in spite of its harsh aspect, is a vast mantle that covers and keeps warm the grasses and grain of our fields. But this is the season when the duties of a large farmer become more extensive and absorbing. He must draw from his winter storehouse all sorts of subsistence that will be needed; he must look out that his fodder shall be enough to keep all his cattle, during their long confinement, which often covers half the year. He must separate his creatures, so that the stronger may not trouble the weaker; must find the best place to water them in winter, with a path to it not too slippery. He must break out roads — joining his team to those of his neighbors to beat down the snow on the highways and keep them open; and he must have the means of guarding against disease and accident, and also a remedy for them if they come. Great must be his forethought, knowledge, and activity, to supply his household with five months' food and clothing. Every wise man must prepare for the roughest season Nature can give us. . . .

"The great rains come along at last, to fill up the springs, brooks and swamps; this is an infallible sign, to which succeeds a sharp freeze, brought by the northwest wind. The piercing cold bridges with ice all the waters, and prepares the ground to receive the great mass of snow that will soon follow. The roads, lately impassable from mud, now become carriageable and easy. Sometimes after this rain there comes an interval of quiet and warmth, called the 'Indian Summer'; its indications are the absence of wind, and a general smoky appearance. The approach of winter was not ominous till now, it sets in towards the middle of November, though often, snows and slight freezes long precede it. . . .

"Soon the northwest wind, that grand harbinger of cold, ceases to blow; the atmosphere thickens perceptibly, and the sky takes on a grey color; you feel a cold that attacks your nose and fingers. This calm lasts a short time; a dull and faraway sound announces some great change. The wind veers round to northeast; the sunlight is dimmed, though you may see no cloud; a general darkness seems coming on. Minute atoms are falling at last; you can hardly see them. They slowly descend, as if scarcely heavier than the air, sure

sign of a heavy fall of snow. Insensibly the number and volume of the white particles become more evident; they fall in bigger flakes; a distant wind makes itself heard more and more, with a sound that swells as it comes on. The wintry element, so long expected, now arrives in all the pomp of Boreas, and begins to give a uniform color to all things. The wind's force gains; the chill and treacherous calm changes to a tempest, which drives the clouds into the southwest with great swiftness. This wind howls at all the doors, sounds in all the chimneys, and whistles in sharpest tone through the bare branches of the nearest trees.

"Sometimes a great snowfall is preceded by sleet; this spreads a brilliant glaze over the ground, the trees, the buildings and fences. What a sudden change between nightfall and morning! The autumn landscape has vanished; Nature is clad in universal splendor; a veil of dazzling white contrasts with the clear blue sky. Muddy roads, deep in mire, have now become icy and solid ways.

"The alarm has spread on all sides; the master, followed by his people, hastens to the fields of the cattle, lets down the bars, calls them, and counts them as they pass out. Oxen and cows, taught by experience, go to find the place where they were fed last winter; the young cattle follow; all plod slowly. The colts, hard to catch in pleasant weather, suddenly grow tamer and more docile to the stroking hand. The sheep, burdened in fleeces overweighted with snow, go forward slowly, bleating in embarrassing fear. These are the first to get attention; soon the horses are led to their stable, the cattle to their stalls; the rest, according to age, are put in the quarters assigned to them. All are now in shelter; no need as yet to feed them; they must feel the sting of hunger before they will eat the dry fodder, forgetting the grass they have lately fed on.

"The farmer's vigilant eye has directed all this; the good master has provided for everything, and no accident has happened. He now returns to the house, wading through a fall of snow that already fills the roadway. His clothes are covered with sleet and icicles; his face, smitten by wind and snowflakes, is red and inflamed. His wife, delighted to see him back before nightfall, greets him with a mug of cider spiced with nutmeg. But a vague trouble annoys them. The children had gone in the morning to a distant school; the sun was then shining, and no thought of snow; they have not yet come home, — where can they be? The mother communicates her anxiety to her spouse, who was already secretly uneasy. He bids one of the negroes go to the schoolhouse with Bonny, the old, faithful mare. Tom obeys in haste, mounts without saddle or bridle, and hurries on through snow and wind. The children were at the door, impatiently awaiting aid from home; the schoolmaster had gone and left them. They recognize

Tom 'the good nigger,' with cries of joy, — all the more from the fun of going home horseback. He sets two behind him and one in front. Rachel, the child of a poor widow, with tears in her eyes sees her companions provided with a horse and a slave, — a cruel mortification, such as children know. 'Must Rachel stay here all alone?' she cries; 'my mother has n't got a horse nor a man.' 'T is the first time the child has realized her situation, or made such a reflection. The negro, touched by her grief, and to please his master's children, puts her on Bonny's neck, after several efforts, and off they go."

Thus the tale goes on, showing how they reached home, were brushed and warmed and fed, and sent off to sleep; while the father watches the driving storm, and the negroes smoke their pipes and tell stories by the kitchen hearth, after piling logs on the family fire. All this, rather too diffusely told, shows how good an observer was St. John. His English style reads as if it had been smoothed a little in Ireland or England, — for his private letters are not so pleasingly written; and his rhetoric in French is hardly so good as in English.

By 1776, when the War of the Revolution began to threaten the peaceful banks of the Hudson, and the hostile Indians were stirring in the country of the Five Nations, St. John had brought his Pine Hill farm to a good state of cultivation. I have submitted here a small photograph of his house and fields, the original drawn by himself, and showing a true colonial landscape. The house, with a Dutch "stoop" in front, is of two stories, with five front windows; it overlooks undulating fields, watered by a brook. At the left is a garden, showing the sassafras tree, of whose planting he tells so pretty a story; on the right is a large grassy yard, around which are the farm-buildings and a dozen negro cabins; farther away is a large orchard, and some fields fenced in. In the meadow sit the farmer and his wife, under a clump of trees; in the foreground a negro guides a plough, on which is fixed a small wheeled chair occupied by an infant. This was little Louis, who dimly remembered, in his old age, this novel ride on his father's plough, and told his grandson, Robert St. John, about it. In the background of the sketch are wooded hills, on the highest of which is a rustic summer-house, surrounded by the pines that gave the farm its name. Late in 1776 St. John's three children were christened in this house by Pastor Tétard, who had married their parents in 1769. Less than three years

later, his New Jersey farm having been ravaged by Indians, and his Pine Hill farm threatened, St. John took his eldest boy, Ally, and set out for Normandy by way of New York, then held by a British garrison under Sir Henry Clinton.

At this time St. John had been ten years married and had three children, all born on the Pine Hill farm, near Cornwall, New York. Five years after his naturalization as a citizen of the colony of New York, he had married at West Chester Miss Mehitable Tippet, — a family name not uncommon in that colony then. I find in the marriage-license registers of New York before the Revolution the following examples of this odd name, variously spelled :

“August 11, 1759, Gilbert Tippet to marry Susannah Clover; June 9, 1763, Philena Tippet and Ezekiel Archer; March 30, 1770, Martha Tippet and Anthony Gleam; July 19, 1773, Darkes (Dorcas) Tippet and Herman Rutgers; and finally, April 21, 1775, Sarah Tippey and Samuel Zeller.”

The spelling of Sarah's name probably indicates how this French Huguenot word was pronounced. I infer it to be Huguenot from the fact that Nicholas Tippet appears in Boston about 1690, associated with Pierre Baudouin, ancestor of the Boston Bowdoin, a well-known French Protestant. We have in the Crèveœur biography the marriage certificate of St. John; he was married September 20, 1769, under the name of “Michel Guillaume St. Jean de Crèveœur, commonly called Mr. St. John,” by a French Protestant minister, Jean-Pierre Tétard, who had been in 1764–1766 pastor of the French church at New York City. Soon after he was pastor of a French church in Charleston, South Carolina; from 1769 to 1776 he was again pastor in New York, and in 1777 chaplain of the Fourth infantry regiment of New York State. At some later time he was secretary and interpreter to Chancellor Livingston. In 1771 he wrote to St. John from West Chester; and a few years later, after the three children were born, he went up river to the Pine Hill farm and baptized them all.

The bride of St. John, whether of French or English or of mingled descent, was born at Yonkers on the Hudson, and at the time of her marriage was living in Dutchess County. She is called by several authors “the daughter of a merchant”; and Nicholas Tippet, the friend of Baudouin, the Boston

merchant, had the same occupation, I believe. She may have been the granddaughter of Nicholas, since she must have been born between 1740 and 1750. Before marrying, St. John had drained a swamp of one thousand acres, so he wrote the mayor of Hartford in 1783; in 1767 he made a voyage to Bermuda and Jamaica; and it was probably on his return that he spent a short time in Charleston, where his friend, Pastor Tétard, was then preaching. In 1770, as the legend reads on the aquarelle of his farmstead, he began to clear up (*défricher*) his woodlands at Pine Hill, and in the next eight years he had brought the farm to a high state of cultivation,—not so remarkable as the farms of his prosperous neighbor, Colonel Woodhull, already mentioned, but so that the product of it, with his resources as land surveyor, supported him comfortably and allowed him to travel considerably. Whether he actually visited all the places which his American Letters describe, is doubtful; he was a born journalist, and understood the art of speaking of a place as if it were before his eyes, when he might in fact be hundreds of miles away. He practised several harmless but perplexing artifices. In his London editions he described himself as the son of an emigrant Calvinist from England, living in Pennsylvania, where, no doubt, he did live for a time before 1764, as a land surveyor, but never afterwards, though he visited there. It is probable that his “*Voyage dans la Haute Pennsylvanie*” was never really made as he describes it. His biographer, speaking of his first book, says:—

“He did not wish to reveal his nationality in a work originally published in England before the peace with America. An English clergyman, Samuel Ayscough of the British Museum, published a pamphlet in 1783, taking St. John to task for his ruse; pointing out ‘the pernicious tendency of these letters in Great Britain’ (by encouraging emigration to a hostile land) and reproaching St. John for styling himself American born, the son of a Scotch Puritan, although everybody knew he was born in Normandy.”

It is probable that he did spend some weeks in 1772 among the Quakers and whale-fishers and candle-makers of Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard, as he professes to have done. That he was ever in Boston before 1784 is uncertain; yet if he had seen the Kennebec valley he must have passed through Boston,

going or returning. With New York and Philadelphia he was very familiar. As already stated, his *American Farmer's Letters* were originally written in English, and in his hazardous journey to England and France in 1780-1781, he carried with him three folio volumes of his English writings, more than half of which were never published in English, but are now partly destroyed, and partly preserved in French translations.

In setting forth from his Orange County farm in 1779, St. John had first to obtain a safe-conduct from General McDougal, the American commander above West Point, and then a similar pass from Sir Henry Clinton at New York City, garrisoned then and for four years longer by British forces. His plan was to pass as a neutral or loyalist in an English ship to England, and thence in some way to Normandy, where his presence seems to have been desired for family reasons. Probably he had been a neutral in the conflict, as so many of his Quaker friends were, until the French alliance of 1778 turned him into an ardent American patriot: Although he had little difficulty in getting into New York, where he had English friends, he was soon arrested and imprisoned as a French spy, and had to remain within the English lines about New York until some time in 1780. At last he was allowed to set sail with his boy and his manuscripts for London. But he was shipwrecked (as he says) on the coast of Ireland, and passed the winter of 1780-1781 in that island. In the late winter or early spring he passed over into England, where he doubtless had friends, either of his youth, or such as he had become acquainted with in his colonial wanderings. He readily found a publisher for his first series of "Letters," and before they actually came out in London he had contrived to cross over to Ostend, a neutral port, and thence found his way, in August, 1781, to Caen and Pierpont, to revisit his aged father, the Marquis de Crèvecoeur. Hardly had he got there when he encountered on the coast of Normandy five Massachusetts naval officers, who had escaped from prison in England, captured an open boat, and sailed across the Channel to France. They spoke no French, had little or no money, and might easily come to grief, even in the country of our good allies. St. John heard their story, took them to his father's house, and afterwards to comfortable quarters in Caen, whence,

by the help of Dr. Franklin, then residing in high favor near Paris, they were sent home to Boston and Newburyport. One of them, Lieutenant George Little, said he had a kinsman in Boston, Captain Gustavus Fellowes, who would undertake to look after the wife and two children of St. John, whom he had left in comfort at Pine Hill, but of whose condition he had heard nothing since sailing from New York a year before. Accordingly, St. John wrote a letter to Captain Fellowes (September 29, 1781) enclosing money, and asking the Boston merchant (for such he was) to give him news of his little family on the banks of the Hudson. Captain Fellowes attended to the request, as will be seen; but by a succession of accidents it was more than two years before the anxious father, landing at New York as French consul, in November, 1783, heard the interesting story now to be related.

Gustavus Fellowes, of Boston, was the son of a Cape Ann sea-captain, and had himself commanded and owned vessels sailing out of Boston. He was born in 1736, a year after St. John, and had two brothers, Cornelius and Nathaniel, "mariner-merchants" and afterwards coffee-planters in Cuba. During the period of early prosperity following the depression caused by the Boston Port Bill and the ensuing siege of Boston and War of the Revolution, these brothers were among the wealthiest Boston merchants. Gustavus was married in 1768 to Sarah, daughter of James Pierpont, who survived him until April, 1828. Both husband and wife are buried in the Davis-May tomb on Boston Common,—their eldest daughter, Abigail, named for a relative, Abigail Davis, having married Perrin May (born in 1767), a rich merchant living on Washington Street, just north of Hollis, where he died in 1844. Gustavus Fellowes had five other daughters, Elizabeth, Sally, Sophia, Fanny, and Hannah; and two sons, Gustavus, Jr. (born 1774, died 1815), and Jonathan. Of these eight children, seven were living in November, 1783, when the French consul at Boston, Letombe, called at the house on Washington Street, near Harvard, to see if the two children of St. John were there. They were, and the story of the way they happened to be there, as related by Captain Fellowes and M. St. John, begins with this letter of December 17, 1781, written by Fellowes to St. John, but which had crossed the Atlantic twice before reaching him in New York, late in 1783:

"I received yours of September 29, 1781 by the hands of the five officers of our naval vessel, the 'Protector.'¹ Upon reading it with attention, your readiness to assist them, and the important service you rendered them, made an impression on my mind, so deep that I at once took all the steps needful to gain information by letter of the state of your family in Orange County. My pains were fruitless, the war had interrupted all communication. Seeing this, I made up my mind to go myself to Orange County. I told my wife, who approved my plan. 'That is no more than right,' she said, 'the family of this good fellow-countryman are perhaps in trouble and affliction. The Indians and the British, they say, have committed many ravages in that district; my dear, let us do for him and his what he did for our friends on the coast of Normandy.'

"A week after I left home I was lucky enough to meet, on the banks of the Hudson, the sheriff of Orange County (Jesse Woodhull, Esq.), who, as Colonel of militia, occupied with his regiment the post at Fish-kill. Your letter, which I handed him, was the first from you he had received since you left the British prison in New York. He asked fifty questions about you and Ally, the state of your family, your misfortunes, etc. I soon learned the death of your wife and the sad state of your children by reason of the raid of the savages, and the scarcity of food that followed. I thrilled with horror at the news, and instantly determined to bring them away from that unfortunate region, carry them to Boston, and bring them up with my own children.

"Fortunately the snow was deep and the roads well trodden. The sheriff approved my purpose; he said: 'You cannot render a greater service to my old friend and good neighbor, St. John. The Indians and the war have broken up all our schools, and the Lord knows how we shall instruct our children.' From that moment I only busied myself with the means of carrying them to Boston as comfortably as possible, and particularly to clothe them warmly. Happily my wife had provided for that before I started; for everything was so out of order that I could not have found, in the whole county of Orange, either woollen stuffs or suitable flannels.

"Since they have been with us we have taken the same care of them

¹ These were the escaped prisoners whom St. John had aided, the August before, in his native Normandy. Their names may be found in the list of sailors of the Revolution, published by the State. These facts are briefly given by R. St. John de Crèveœur, in his biography, of 1883, entitled 'St. John de Crèveœur, sa Vie et ses Ouvrages (1735-1813) avec les Portraits de Crèveœur et de la Comtesse D'Houdetot. Paris, Librairie des Bibliophiles, Rue Saint-Honoré, 338.' The portraits are in profile, representing St. John in 1786, at the age of fifty-one, and Madame d'Houdetot at the age of fifty-six. The book is out of the market, and copies now can be had only by favor of the author's family (a widow and children), living at 120 Rue de Longchamp, Paris.

as of our own. They are good children, and we have fortunately a boy and girl of their ages, with whom they live on the best of terms. I make no distinction between them, either in dress or education, except that we often give the preference to your children, as having more need of it, and being more unfortunate. My wife and I receive them as if they were children we had lost and recovered; if I were so unfortunate as never to see or hear of you, we should treat them and educate them as our own. Not knowing what religious principles you had given them, I take them to church with my family, and they offer to God the same worship that we do. If you receive this, you must tell us your wishes on this point, — we shall conform to them with pleasure.

“Before leaving Sheriff Woodhull, who took me to his home, I inquired what had been the expenses of your children since the death of their mother, and offered to put 40 guineas in his hands. He would not take it, and said that the sale of some cattle and horses, that had escaped the plunderers, had brought money enough to pay for their support, which, in fact, judging by the poor condition in which I found them, could not have cost much. As to your plantation and outlands, I advised him never to allow their sale without getting your consent. I received the amount of your bill of exchange, and shall use it for the good of your children. I will send you a copy of this letter by all opportunities until I get a reply from you.”

When Sir Fowell Buxton was seeking the aid of the British Government for a philanthropic enterprise in Africa, and found a cold reception, while his kinsmen, the Quaker Gurneys, gave him large financial aid, he said, “I found in Downing Street princes who were stingy merchants, but in London City I found merchants who were princes.” The combination in Mr. Fellowes, as shown by this transaction, of the exactness of the merchant and the generosity of the prince, is very striking, and makes us wish to know more of a Bostonian who behaved so handsomely.

Thirty years ago a granddaughter of Gustavus Fellowes, in a little book published at New York by the firm of Hurd and Houghton (“Fannie St. John, a Romantic Incident of the American Revolution, by Emily Pierpont Delesdernier, author of ‘Hortense,’” etc.) undertook to give the world this knowledge. About 1758, at the age of twenty-one, Gustavus Fellowes was master and part owner of a vessel in which he made merchant voyages from Boston to England. He accumulated property, built vessels as well as sailed them, and when the Revolution came on, took the side of the Colonies very warmly. He re-

fused in 1773 to take on board a cargo of tea which was to be shipped from England, to pay the hated tea-tax at Boston ; and which finally found its way into Boston Harbor, under the direction of Samuel Adams and John Hancock. He and his brother Cornelius married two cousins, Hannah, daughter of Robert Pierpont, and Sarah, daughter of James Pierpont and Sarah Dorr. The former was the adoptive mother of Fanny St. John ; their house was at the corner of Harvard Street. Fanny told her father in March, 1784, this story : —

“It was time, Father, that Providence should begin to show favor to my little brother Lewis and me. When Mr. Fellowes got to West Chester, we had neither shoes nor stockings, and were almost naked ; the weather was getting cold, and the other children of the neighborhood were in the same condition. My little brother, five years old, being younger, did not feel so much the misery of our lot, though he cried a good deal ; but I, who remembered well your tender care and that of poor mother, — how I did grieve when I thought of that, and it was often ! J. D. and his wife, not knowing who this stranger was that came to take us away, did all they could to persuade us to stay with them, and tried to alarm little brother, who began to cry and say ‘I don’t want to go with that man !’ Mr. Fellowes was obliged to take by force from the arms of Mrs. D. Philip Lewis, crying hard, — and she crying, too. I said to them, ‘We cannot be worse off than we are ; why should you wish to keep us ? You have nothing to give us ; scarcely can you supply your own wants. This man has come such a long way, that he must wish us well ; perhaps God sent him.’ I remember this, too ; I got into this stranger’s sleigh with the greatest eagerness, for it would carry me away from the place where I lost my mother, and had suffered so many hardships. O Father, you don’t know how good and warm were the clothes that this man, whom God sent, brought with him ! I thrilled with joy when I put them on. I heard afterward that his dear wife, my tender mother by adoption, who must have been inspired by Heaven, gave him the idea. You could not have been more kind, yourself, than this good man was, in our whole journey. When we had to cross a big river on the ice, which he knew gave me a great fright, he always told us some pretty story, to occupy our minds and shorten the time. When we got to Hartford, some of his friends there asked him what he had got in his sleigh. ‘Two children,’ he replied, ‘that I had lost and have just recovered. I am taking them to Boston and my wife will soon make them forget all they have suffered. We have seven children there now, and these two little lost sheep will make nine.’ That was just what he said.

“In Boston how I enjoyed being pitied, warmly clothed, having

something to eat when I was hungry, and especially not to fear that the Indians would come! Lewis began to laugh as soon as he got here. I scolded him well for having cried at Chester, and for wanting to stay there. They put me to sleep the first night with Abigail, the oldest daughter, who was near my age. She is politeness and gentleness itself, and I love her like my own sister. They put Lewis to bed with little Gustavus, who is only five months older. The next morning Mrs. Fellowes combed our hair and put on clothes like those of the others, and when we had got rested, we were all sent to school together. Not only did she wash and dress us herself every morning, but she had us sit by her at the table, and gave us the best that there was, for she said, 'These poor children have had so hard a time that they must have more care than our own.' When she went visiting she often took me rather than my good sister Abby — especially if we were going to sail in the Harbor, or go to Castle Island, or Roxbury, Cambridge, Dorchester or Jamaica Plains. Abby, who is goodness itself, would often say, 'Yes, mother, take Fanny with you; I shall like to stay at home and care for the little ones; she has more need to have a good time than I have.' When I grew bigger I refused this preference, and we now take turns in going out, or go together, often. Then, too, I have become useful to mother, — for a year and a half I help her every morning, along with Abby, to wash and dress the younger children, and send them to school. She has taught me to sew, knit, and spin; to mend clothes, make bread, and do a little cooking. She had a baby eight months ago, and I was the godmother of the little girl, to whom they gave my name. They gave it also to a whaleship, Fanny, that sailed two months ago for Brazil. Oh, I hope she will come back well laden with oil! When little Fanny is weaned I expect to have the whole care of her, and have her sleep with me, so that she shall be no more trouble to her mother. I want you to call her your granddaughter."

This story is related in the third volume of St. John's French edition of his "Letters of an American Farmer" (Paris, 1787) and is confirmed from other sources. After listening to Fanny he takes up the tale and quotes himself as saying to Fanny (really to his readers): —

"Can all this be true? Are all these things possible? this long series of generosities, kindnesses, hospitality, seems more like a miracle than the common course of affairs. It comes from a protecting, invisible power. If frail humanity could ascend to the first causes of the events that afflict or concern us, I might tell you the origin of all this. It would be due to the inscrutable chance that led to the coast of Normandy those five Americans that you saw here not long ago. Yes, all this

is the result of that mysterious accident which drifted them across the English Channel, for 70 leagues, in a frail boat, only 16 feet long, with a poor sail and no compass, to the very place next where I was living. I was the one person in all that great province who could have taken a lively interest in their fate; for I had come from their country, and had suffered several years in the same cause. If they had landed 30 miles farther up or farther down than Ver, quite likely I should never have heard of them."

After reaching Boston in March, 1784, St. John spent some days there, and went to church with the Fellowes family. His daughter whispered to him, "I am delighted; our neighbors who have so often spoken of you, and have been so glad to hear of your coming, will be much gratified to see us, father and children, come to 'worship with them' ["An expression peculiar to Boston," says St. John in a note] and offer together at God's altar their prayers and thanksgiving." This reflection, he says, was very touching. He adds:—

"Nor was I less touched at the sort of sensation that my presence in the church caused; several persons turned their eyes towards me, and seemed to look at me with much attention. I heard some in the next pews say softly, 'That is Fanny's father.' And I noticed how much my child enjoyed this mark of public interest. What was my surprise on coming out of church to have Mr. Fellowes introduce me to the five Americans — [George Little, Alexander Story, Clement Lemon, Samuel Wales, and John Collins] whom I have mentioned. Learning that I was to be at this church, they had come there on purpose to see me. A crowd of citizens then came up, shook my hand and congratulated me on my happy return, and on finding my children in such good hands. 'It is to your worthy fellow-citizen,' said I, 'that I owe all this, and to the Divine Providence which interested him in them, without having known their father.' Mr. Fellowes then invited the five Americans to dine with me."

Is not this a pleasing picture of Boston hospitality one hundred and twenty years ago? From one account we learn that Gustavus Fellowes, Jr., was a little older than Louis St. John, who was born October 22, 1774, at Pine Hill, near Cornwall, New York, and that Fanny Fellowes was born in 1782, and Abby in 1770. The ages, etc., of these children and of his own are not always very exactly given by St. John, who called Louis only five in 1781, though he was really seven, and says

Fanny was but nine, when she was nearly eleven, having been born, as we know by the New York record, December 14, 1770. As I said, dates are the weak point with St. John, though he was an exact mathematician; he seems to have changed them to suit himself. From other sources we have the true dates. He had left his farm on the Hudson late in April, 1779, reached New York a few days or weeks later, was detained there, some of the time in prison, until September 1, 1780, when he was allowed to sail for England. After a voyage of six weeks he was shipwrecked on the Irish coast, but reached Dublin in October, and seems to have spent the winter there with his elder son, Alexander ("Ally"). In May, 1781, he was in London, and late in that summer he sailed for Ostend, and reached his paternal home in Normandy, August 2, 1781. August 10, Count de Houdetot wrote to Dr. Franklin recommending him as "having lost the greater part of his property by the present war." The 27th of August he wrote himself to Franklin, then in Paris, speaking of the five Americans, and saying, "As they are genteel, discreet men from the Massachusetts, I have placed them in a good house and procured them the hospitality of the city of Caen." Later in the year, he informed Franklin, "The Americans who escaped from England last summer are happily embarked for Newbury, in Massachusetts," where they seem to have arrived in November.

Mme. de Houdetot had spoken of St. John to Franklin under the name of Crèveœur while he at that time always had signed himself St. John. Explaining this to Franklin (September 26, 1781), he said in his peculiar English:—

"The reason of the mistake proceeds from the singularity of the French custom, which renders their names almost arbitrary, and often leads them to forget their family ones. It is in consequence of this that there are more *alias dictios* in this than in any other country in Europe. The name of our family is St. Jean, in English St. John — a name as ancient as the conquest of England by William the Bastard."

This story has been extended beyond my first intention because it introduces so much testimony from a forgotten source to the native philanthropy of Bostonians. The Sons and Daughters of the Revolution and Colonial Dames, etc., are seeking to connect their ancestry with persons of distinction. Gibbon said in regard to the descent of the earls of

Denbigh from the House of Austria — a fiction now exploded — and the connection of Fielding, the novelist, with Lord Denbigh: "The successors of Charles V. may disdain their brethren of England; but the romance of Tom Jones will outlive the palace of the Escorial." So I would say to the present generation: "Your distant ancestors may have been the greatest of centurions or the most fraudulent of Plantagenets; but your true glory of descent will be to have had for ancestors those plain citizens of Boston, to whom no good cause ever appealed in vain, and who gave away their money with a generosity as natural as was the frugality and industry which had supplied it."

About the time of Fanny St. John's marriage in New York to M. Otto (the German diplomatist, who had been brought to this country by Luzerne, as a secretary of the French legation), that is, in 1790, Gustavus Fellowes experienced reverses in business, sold his fine estate on Harvard and Washington Streets, and removed to Machias in Maine. There he engaged in the Labrador fisheries (having formerly been interested in whale-fishing), and remained in Machias some years. At the request of his wealthier brother, Nathaniel Fellowes, who owned rich plantations in Cuba, he returned to Boston, and for a time the two brothers lived together in Roxbury. About 1805 Nathaniel died in Cuba, and there was a dispute over his property, in consequence of the production of a will made in Cuba, which differed materially from the one he had left in Boston. The Spanish will was eventually followed; but some compromise seems to have been made by which his grandchildren, by his daughter, Mrs. Jonathan Amory, received the income of his Boston property, while that in Cuba, consisting of plantations, sugar-mills, etc., and valued in 1806 at \$350,000, went to his nephew residing in Cuba. Gustavus Fellowes received little or nothing, and the fortunes of that branch of the family were never restored. During their residence at Machias an acquaintance seems to have been formed between the Fellowes family and that of Captain Delesdernier, a Swiss officer in the Revolution, who had established himself in eastern Maine. This led ultimately to the marriage of one of the adopted sisters of Fanny St. John to Louis F. Delesdernier; Miss Emily was their daughter, and thus the granddaughter of Gustavus Fellowes, of whom her little book gives a glowing

account. He spent the later years of his life at a house in Hollis Street, Boston, and is described by her as

“a man of most dignified appearance and address. His abundant hair was silvery white, and lay in close curls all over the noble head and around the high, intellectual brow. He had dark eyes of peculiar brilliancy, and on his cheeks there was the ruddy glow of health to the last.”

He sleeps, as mentioned, in the old burying-ground at the foot of the Common on Boylston Street, in the Davis-May tomb. One of his daughters had married, in the May family, a cousin of Mrs. Alcott, the mother of Louisa Alcott.

The family of Miss De Lesdernier (as Albert Gallatin spelt the Swiss name) deserves a brief mention. Its founder in America was a colonist of Nova Scotia, who in 1780 had five sons, born there or in Geneva. One of these, Louis Frederic (born in 1751), had engaged in a plan to capture a British fort at the head of the Bay of Fundy; failing in which, he was compelled to flee to Machias, where Colonel John Allan commanded a small fort for Massachusetts. In May, 1777, Allan made Lesdernier his secretary, with the rank of lieutenant in the Revolutionary Army. He was soon after captured by the British and carried into Halifax, where he remained a prisoner until exchanged, at some time before September, 1780. At that time young Gallatin, with his friend Henri Serre, found Louis Lesdernier living in one of the four or five log-houses of a clearing near Colonel Allan's fort at Machias; began to live with him there, and to engage in trade. They had met his mother at a French coffee-house in Boston, and in consequence of this acquaintance had come to Machias. They had left Geneva secretly in April, 1780, landed at Gloucester in July, from a New England vessel sailing out of L'Orient in France, and at once proceeded to Boston, and repaired to the coffee-house of M. Tahon, in North Street, where they found Mme. Lesdernier. Gallatin, who was only nineteen, enjoyed the wild life in Maine, and remained more than a year, trading with Indians, campaigning a little, and canoeing a good deal. Serre, writing to their friend Badollet in Geneva, said:—

“We are here in Machias, five Genevans in all, men and women. True, three of them were born in America, but they have preserved the

republican spirit of their ancestors, and M. Lesdernier junior, born in America of a Genevese father, is the most zealous of all the Americans I have seen for the liberty of his country. We live in the forest beside a river; we can hunt, fish, and either bathe or skate according to the season. Just now we are roasting ducks before a wood-fire, — and we cut the wood ourselves. In Geneva, as you know, we sail in boats on the Lake; here I have more fun, guiding the Indian canoes. They are made of birch bark, and with one or two inside they go charmingly. Every small stream has water enough for them; you can lie down as in bed, and paddle them at your ease. Going down a tiny river, in superb weather, reclining in the canoe, on a blanket, I could see the meadow but two feet away. Indeed there was so little water that I seemed to glide over grass and reeds. Come out next summer and take a hand with me in paddling a canoe! We will go up the St. John and the St. Lawrence, and visit Canada.”

In fact they did go to Passamaquoddy, now Eastport, where Lesdernier was afterwards postmaster and collector of the port; and they helped him cut hay “on Frost’s meadow, near Boyden’s Lake.”

Gallatin went away in October, 1781, and the next year was teaching French to students in Harvard College. This place was procured for him by Dr. Bentley of Salem. From there he went to Virginia and Pennsylvania, and at the age of forty was Secretary of the Treasury under President Jefferson. Lesdernier remained at Eastport, to which he had migrated, and in due time married the Widow Clarke, a daughter of Gustavus Fellowes, then of Machias, and was the father of Miss Emily, who wrote “Fannie St. John.” His son, William Delesdernier, a contemporary of my cousin, Benjamin Leavitt of Eastport, was a Democratic politician, and sheriff of Washington County; and two of his sons, Lewis Frederick of Texas, and another, served in the Confederate navy and army during the Civil War. The grandfather was living in 1834, but died about that time in Calais, Maine.

Like his benefactor, Gustavus Fellowes, St. John found Fortune rather fickle. On his return to France in 1781, after so many trials, he had a few years of good fortune. His family friends took him up warmly, and introduced him in good company, of which at first he was rather shy, from his forgetfulness of his native French. That knowledge soon came back to him, and his book had such success in England that St. John

became a lion. He preferred to live in America, and his friends at court, Beauvau, d'Harcourt, Condorcet, etc., were able to procure for him the important office of French consul at New York, to which post he came back late in 1783, just before the British army finally evacuated New York. He found there, among a mass of letters, that one from Mr. Fellowes above quoted, which had gone to England on its way to France and come back to New York without finding St. John. His friends in the city told him of his wife's death; but he was unable to go on to Boston to look up his children till March, 1784, when he had been almost five years separated from them. He then resumed his active habits, — visited Boston, New Haven, the upper Hudson, Philadelphia, and the newer settlements of Pennsylvania, and the fast-growing State of Vermont, not yet recognized as a member of the Union. Through his friend and correspondent, Ethan Allen, he procured the naming of Vermont towns, — Vergennes for the French minister, St. Johnsbury for himself, and Danville for his friend D'Anville. He probably drew the device for the escutcheon of Vermont, and gave its French name to the Green Mountain State. His French friends and his daughter Fanny in 1784–1785 became citizens of New Haven.

This mark of honor shown by the good people of Connecticut to French notables for whom they had only the word of St. John, excited some ridicule and some wrath in Paris, when it became public there; and St. John took pains to make it known. The private *Memoirs* of Bachaumont, then a person of note, contain a pretended letter from New Haven, perhaps fabricated in Paris, which said: —

“The joke of this collection of names is that none of these persons is known here in New Haven, except by name. It is a shocking ingratitude to have preferred these titled aristocrats to our real benefactors, Leray de Chaumont, Montyon, Beaumarchais and the principal financiers of Bordeaux, Nantes and other French seaports, who were the first and real authors of our glory and liberty, by furnishing us supplies and weapons.”

There was some truth in this. The incident shows, among other things, how much such empty honors were then valued in France, as coming from the idealized republic of Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington. Franklin had been replaced in

France as American ambassador by Jefferson when St. John, returning from his consulship, landed at L'Orient in July, 1785, and Jefferson became, as Franklin had been, one of the intimates of the Countess de Houdetot, and a correspondent of St. John. But an early occupation of the returned French consul was to prepare a third volume of his popular "Letters." The two French volumes of 1784 had sold so well that a new edition was called for; and another volume could be ventured. Writing to his son Ally (November 13, 1785) and telling him this, St. John said: "I shall put into it several useful things; and I depend on narrating the unhappy adventures of your sister Fanny and your brother Louis, together with the wonderful story of the assistance which Mr. Fellowes gave them." This is the passage just recited. But he also went into society a great deal, visiting his dukes and countesses, and dining often with Jefferson at the legation in Paris. Brissot de Warville, however, at that time a warm friend of St. John, stirred up a quarrel between him and the Marquis de Chastellux, who had travelled in America, and did not think so well of the Quakers as St. John did. As Chastellux was an intimate of St. John's titled friends, this was an annoyance that shows its traces in a letter from Jefferson to St. John (December 8, 1786), which also indicates the terms on which they then were: —

"I have just done reading the New York newspapers, and send them to you, herewith. When you have done with them, I will thank you to return them, as Mr. Short has not read them. M. Marmontel and Madame are coming to dine with me day after to-morrow (Sunday), and I hope the good Countess D'Houdetot will be disengaged that day, and will be good enough to come too. We dine at 3 o'clock. I hardly dare to ask you, too, because a person (Philip Mazzei) is likely to come with the Marmontels, who is, I believe, disagreeable to you. Nevertheless you are the best judge of that, and you know I shall be happy to see you, if the company suits you. Will you be good enough to transmit my invitation to the Countess, and let me know her answer?"

From a paper of my friend Mr. S. O. Todd, of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, I extract this:

"A favored residence of the countess was at Sannois, a few miles from Paris; there on the 12th of April, 1781, she and her friends had received that sage American, Benjamin Franklin, with unex-

pected civilities. Mme. d'Houdetot and her party walked a half-mile from her Sannois château to meet the American statesman and philosopher, and the countess greeted him with a verse of her own composition. At an elaborate dinner, toasts, seven in number, were given in Franklin's honor, by the countess and others. A prolongation of festivities included in the afternoon the planting by Franklin in the garden of the château, of a Virginia locust. A poetic effusion by the countess for this ceremony was afterward engraved upon a marble column close at hand. On his return to America the countess wrote to Franklin: 'Think of me sometimes, of Sannois, and the revered tree planted by your hands, which grows on soil belonging to me. I preserve the memory of those moments you have so kindly passed here, and with tender interest I cultivate the memorial you have left of your transit.'"

It was in this same year, 1781, that St. John de Crèvecoeur arrived in France and had awakened the interest of Mme. de Houdetot, who continued to be his good friend till her death, a few months only before his own. After her death he paid a grateful tribute to her. Of her literary character he said:—

"The mind and memory of Mme. d'Houdetot, enriched by constant reading of the best authors, and frequent conversations with one and another of her learned friends, (Marmontel, d'Alembert, etc.,) furnished to her conversation a limitless and inextinguishable flow of ideas which made it instructive and delightful. To this talent she united a perfect knowledge of the vernacular, a taste and judgment which nearly approached infallibility. This is why she was so often consulted by young authors. Florian, the amiable Florian, one of the most intimate of her friends, did not publish a book, not even a fable, until he had submitted the manuscript to the wise criticism of Mme. d'Houdetot. Removed, by taste and principle, from all tendency to malevolence, she never had an enemy. I have often heard her say that the only way to avoid satire and malicious gossip was never to merit them. Her silence toward those who had been indiscreet or reprehensible, was not less remarkable than her talent for praising, appreciating, and getting others to esteem all worthy action."

Upon St. John's return to New York, early in 1787, this amiable Countess said to him, a few days before he left her country house at Sannois for L'Orient:—

"My friend, you are leaving your two dear boys here, and you know my fondness for these young sufferers by the calamities of war. From

now until you come back, I will adopt them; I desire they should love and consider me as their mamma, and hope they will call me by that name. We shall correspond frequently. Every Thursday I will take them to dine with Mr. Jefferson; every Sunday he and your boys shall dine with me; when convenient I will take them to the theatre. They are at school, but they shall spend all their vacations with me, whether I remain here at Sannois, or go to the Marais or to Méréville."

She kept her word, and was most gratefully remembered by St. John.¹

Like this famous woman, St. John was very faithful in his friendships. He had received many civilities (and no doubt his fortunes had been advanced) at the hands of the Pennsylvania Quakers, of whom he always spoke well. They were quite in the way of being Tories during the Revolution, — at least the older Quakers, — and Brissot, when he turned against his friend St. John, accused *him* of having been a Tory too and very much afraid that secret would be revealed to his American friends. Probably he did not at first take sides with the patriots; but after the defeat of Burgoyne was followed by the French alliance, he left no doubt on which side his sympathies were. His long sojourn at Nantucket, where the Quakers were averse to the approaching war, gives color to the story that he hoped for a peaceful solution of the quarrel, as many of the good patriots did. In the French edition of the "Letters" he has some anecdotes of the Pennsylvania and Delaware Quakers which do not appear in the English book. One of his chapters has much to say of Walter Mifflin and the Vinings of Delaware, and of that illustrious Quaker of French parentage, Anthony Bénézet, one of the first abolitionists in America. St. John brings out the fact that it was Bénézet and his friend Warner Mifflin who first moved actively in Virginia and Pennsylvania for the abolition of slavery and the discontinuance of the slave trade. A life

¹ *Portraits of the St. Johns.* In April, 1786, St. John, being in Paris, wrote to his son Ally at Caen: "Poree, my father's valet, on his way to Pierpont, by way of Caen, will carry you a paper-box which contains a portrait of the kind Countess (Houdetot), one of Fanny, of Mr. Fellowes, and of your papa." Of these the first and last survive, and are engraved in Robert St. John's life of his ancestor. They are profile sketches in black chalk, finished in pastel. On the backs of the frames are these English names, written by St. John: "The right honorable lady Sophia, comtesse de Houdetot," and "Saint John de Crèvecœur, your father." Perhaps the other two have not disappeared.

of Warner Mifflin, published at Philadelphia in 1905, by Miss Hilda Justice, his descendant, gives St. John's account of Mifflin's mission to Howe and Washington. Basing upon this narrative of St. John his plot of "The Quaker," Kotzebue, the prolific German playwright, took Mifflin for his hero. This one-act drama has been translated by Miss Amelia Gummere, and published in the "Pennsylvania Magazine" of October, 1905. This Mifflin was the first cousin of General Mifflin of the Revolutionary Army. He was one of a committee sent by the Quakers of Delaware (1777), about the time of the battle of Germantown, to persuade Sir William Howe and General Washington to declare an armistice in the region of the Delaware River, and abate the horrors of war, which were then excessive in that neighborhood. St. John quotes Warner Mifflin as saying this to "Friend William Howe": —

"Being English, perhaps you know that the Society of Friends never takes part in wars, nor in disputes public or private. The Gospel forbids us, by enjoining us to view all men as our brothers. At the same time that it recommends peace and fraternity among ourselves, it bids us do what we can to anticipate and prevent evil. Our brethren of Delaware, in our Meeting for Sufferings, have thought it possible to procure an interview between thee and Friend George Washington, which might bring about an armistice, at least during winter; and that such an armistice might lead to a good understanding and eventually to peace. Believing this to be a sound and useful idea, inspired by the Spirit, whence come all our good thoughts, as well as any good we may do, I have been deputed to communicate it to you. What do you think of it, Friend Howe?"

Sir William, thus appealed to, said: —

"I like your idea: it seems noble, and may be useful. Whether it succeeds or not, it does you honor, and confirms the good opinion I always had of your sect. I like to see those who do not take part in war striving to soften its horrors, and taking measures to restore peace. But the case is not the same with General Washington and myself. He can take the orders of Congress within four days, but I must have some months to get those of my king. However, if an interview is possible, I will gladly welcome a short armistice, to give my troops time to rest and enjoy a little vacation."

For this reason, probably, Congress did not order the armistice, but the purpose of the Quakers was respected by both sides.

Brissot de Warville took the same view of the Quakers that St. John did at first, praising them for their hatred of tyranny and their love of free speech. But later Brissot rather failed to support St. John in his American experiences, as also did Mazzei. In 1791, alluding to the conduct of the Quakers during the war, Brissot says : —

“M. Crèveœur has assured me that the Quakers were eager to mitigate the woes of war, and aid the prisoners at New York with money, food, and even with bail, when there was need of it. He has told me of seeing in Dutchess county, New York, some Quakers journeying in a wagon when it was very cold, going to make donations of food to the prisons.”

Of the general accuracy of St. John's descriptions of American scenery and manners Brissot speaks in terms of praise, and his language shows how well known were the French “Letters.” Arriving at New York from Boston in August, 1788, Brissot says : —

“I am reading again the description given by M. Crèveœur of this part of the United States, and after comparing all the particulars with what I have yet seen, I must confess that all the strokes in the picture are faithful. . . . Albany is the chief town of rural New York, situated where the Mohawk River empties into the North River. This valley is the region of which M. Crèveœur has given a sketch so enchanting ; its rigorous winters he has transformed into a delightful season for men who chiefly love the pleasures of Nature.”

Here the allusion is to that remarkable picture of the coming on of winter, the scene of which he places at German Flats, then the chief town of Herkimer County, sixty miles west of Schenectady, in the Mohawk valley. It is now a part of the town of Herkimer, and has lost those rural features which so delighted St. John. His description still applies, however, so far as nature is concerned, to many hundred townships in the northeastern States.

St. John numbered among his American friends President Stiles of Yale College, and describes at much length a college commencement there in 1784, or later, with long extracts from an address or sermon by Dr. Stiles, who had gone from the same wealthy parish in New Hampshire to the president's chair at New Haven, which Dr. Langdon had quitted with

regret, a few years earlier, to sacrifice his health and peace of mind in the squabbles of Harvard College, only to be repaid with insolence, neglect, and an unsettled bill of expenses. Dr. Stiles was more fortunate. I find in the third volume of his recently published "Literary Diary" (p. 150) this entry : —

"March 1, 1785. I drafted a diploma of the Freedom of the City [New Haven] for M. Michael St. John de Crèvecoeur, Consul of France for Connecticut, N. York and New Jersey."

To this in a note is added : —

"A letter from this gentleman is preserved among Dr. Stiles's papers, as follows : —

NEW YORK, 8th June, 1785.

MR. PRESIDENT : — A second French edition of the 2 vols. of ye American Farmer's Letters being on the eve of appearing, I am earnestly desired by the editor of that work, which has had the Good Fortune of Pleasing the Publick ; & he would think himself very much obliged to you, if you'd think proper to communicate to him some anecdotes of ye Late War, — by Anecdotes the Editor Means, Uncommon Instances of Bravery, Resignation, Patience, Courage, — Cruelty on the Part of our Ennemies, or any other Characteristics of the Violence of the War, & of the brave Resistance of the Americans.

They would be not less interesting were they on some Natural Subject ; but such is the high Esteem and Veneration the Editor of that Work has for the President of Yale College, that with Great Pleasure he leaves to you the Nature and Choice of these anecdotes which would appear with your name if not disagreeable to you. I am very sure that was this subject Introduced among your Friends, a Great number of Curious & Interesting Facts would be mentioned which it wou'd be a Great Pity to loose & to see sunk in oblivion. The late revolution is an object so Interesting to humanity in General, that not the least Feature of it ought to be lost. Receive therefore kindly this Request of the Editor abovementioned & deign to contribute to the Greater Perfection of that work by communicating to him whatever may have come to your knowledge or to that of your Friends.

I believe I shall sail from here ere I have received the Diplomas you have so Generously contributed to Procure — but if they are sent to Col. Burr or to my office No. 202 Queen Street, they will be forwarded to me in Normandy. Depend on my Zeal to Procure for your College such Proofs of these Good & Great People's gratitude as will be ade-

quate to the Favor & Honor conferred on them by the City of New Haven.

Wishing you & the College at the head of which you so worthily Preside every degree of Prosperity I take my leave of you: Receive kindly this Mark of the high Esteem and unfeigned Respect wherewith I subscribe Myself Sir Your Very Humble Serv't

ST. JOHN.

Mr. Dexter, Stiles's editor, adds in a note: "The edition referred to was published at Paris in 1787, but did not contain any contribution from Dr. Stiles." About fifty anecdotes are in it, and some of them date from New Haven. Dr. Stiles wrote the diplomas, and they were so complimentary to St. John (who had procured the same honor for Mme. de Houdetot and her friend St. Lambert, etc.) that in translating them for his son Louis he left out much of the praise. The particular work he had done for New Haven was in regard to a botanic garden, — which apparently Colonel Jesse Woodhull's brother Richard (discharged in 1765 from the faculty of Yale for the high crime of being a Sandemanian) already had in that city. These diplomas are probably still in the records of New Haven. Fanny St. John, as already mentioned, was made a Citoyenne of New Haven at the age of fifteen! She was still at the house of Mr. Fellowes in Boston, where she remained till her father returned from France in 1787; and she saw a great fire there, near her protector's house, which made her ill, — so narrowly did the Fellowes family escape burning out.

St. John's letter to President Stiles shows how much he valued his slight connection with the American Revolution, many episodes of which appear or are the subject of allusion and disquisition in his six French volumes.

It is surprising that nearly all the American comment on St. John, as a writer, thinker, and observer, should be based wholly on the imperfect first volume of his "Letters" published in England in 1782, under circumstances that restricted his expression of regard for the revolted Colonies, not yet acknowledged by George III. as independent States. This English edition, though somewhat improved in the revision of 1783, had in fact little more than a third part of the contents of his final French edition of 1787. It contains less than 100,000 words, whereas the French edition has 280,000. If to this we add the

contents of the three volumes of 1801, we shall find that St. John published in French about five times as much as in English; and an examination of his six volumes will show that their contents are a far more valuable contribution to American history, topography, and social condition, from 1757 to 1800, than any other contemporary author has left us. Their maps and engravings are well drawn and engraved, their information is generally accurate, except in the matter of dates, and they supply facts for which the newspapers and public documents of the period might be searched in vain. A curious interest attaches to the vignettes in the three volumes of 1787. They are circular, like medals, and may have been designed for such. In the second volume France, helmeted and armed like Pallas, wields her spear, and holds forth her fleur de lys shield, to protect America, as the infant Hercules, strangling the serpents, against the rampant British lion. The legend around the circle is Horace's line, "*Non sine dis animosus infans.*" Below this device are the dates of the two surrenders, — at Saratoga, October 17, 1777, and October 19, 1781, at Yorktown. This is the best device of the three. The first volume has a funeral monument, on which are inscribed the names of Generals Warren, Wooster, Montgomery, and Mercer. Beneath the monument, outstretched on the ground, lies America, in Indian undress, mourning for her slain sons. The legend this time reads, "*O, Manes Heroum, vestra libera est patria.*" In the third volume the figure is an all-seeing eye, from which radiate beams of light to or from thirteen stars, representing the new States of our Union, with the motto around them, "*Nova Constellatio.*" To carry out this series of allegories, a frontispiece in one volume represents America, as a nursing mother in Indian dress, with hungry babes clinging about her, and the inscription below, "*Ubi Libertas et Panis, ibi Patria.*" The abundance of food among American farmers always delighted St. John.

St. John's life as an "American Farmer," his favorite title, lasted at most but seventeen years, — that is, from 1762 to 1779; nor did he, as French consul, own or cultivate any considerable tract of land. But in his residence at New York City, which brought him from 1783 to 1790 into relations with many distinguished men, he journeyed extensively in this country, besides making a visit or two in France. After 1790

he never resided in this country, nor ever came to it, — although during the stormy times of the French Revolution he often dated his letters to his children and friends from places in America, for reasons of caution. His only daughter, Frances America (Fanny St. John), was married to M. Otto in New York, in April, 1790, just before her father returned to France for the last time. The wedding was at St. Peter's Church, and at the ceremony were present Jefferson of Virginia, Colonel Wadsworth of Hartford, and Jonathan Trumbull of New Haven, Judge Richard Morris and William Seaton of New York, and other American friends of the Farmer-Consul. Madame Otto, born in a log-cabin, afterwards as the Countess Otto moved in the best society of France, England, and Germany. Her little brother Louis, born by the Hudson in 1774, went with his father to France in 1784, but as a youth, to avoid some perils of the Reign of Terror, came back to New York, and lived a pioneer's life for some years in New Jersey. Returning to France, he became an officer in Napoleon's Italian army, and served through the Napoleonic wars; then married, and was the grandfather of Robert St. John, who wrote his father's life, and is our authority for most of the authenticated facts thereof. Alexander and Louis St. John were the two boys for whom Mme. de Houdetot took such pains while they were at school in France. "Ally" died early during the French Revolution.

Crèvecoeur had published his first volume in England, because it was then a ready market for all books relating to America. Although the War of the Revolution was not ended and New York was still held by the British troops, it was well understood that there would soon be peace upon some conditions. Crèvecoeur, in that love of mystification which haunted him from the first, and for which there may have been a reason of personal safety originally, had pretended in his London book to be a "farmer in Pennsylvania," though it was nearly twenty years since he could have really cultivated land there, if ever. Pouncing upon this harmless disguise, as if it covered a wicked purpose to injure England, Samuel Ayscough, a pedantic parson, with much industry of the bookworm sort, as already mentioned, attacked St. John in 1783, in a pamphlet issued by John Fielding in Paternoster Row. He said this among other severities:—

“The peace of the literary world is again disturbed by a new species of forgery, imported from the Continent of America, whose emissaries are endeavoring to sow the same seed in this country which has been so much cultivated there as to produce a total dismemberment from the British Empire. A dismemberment of which the Americans will long repent; from a country which they ought to have bent every nerve to have encouraged and supported. A country which had been the means of cultivating their deserts, populating their colonies, providing for their necessities, defending them at the expense of immense treasure and blood, and disposing of the produce of their fields; whilst the only advantage received in return consisted in supplying their wants with our manufactures, — in general on more reasonable terms than it was in the power of any other nation to do. . . . It is my intention to show that this ‘Farmer in Pennsylvania’ was not an American born, as he pretends; that he never was a farmer there; that many things which he represents are false; that others, reported as recent facts, are old stories. . . . It is a fact well known that he is a Frenchman, born in Normandy; that his residence was chiefly at New York, and there looked upon by the ‘Loyalists’ as no friend to Englishmen. . . . The book will plainly appear to be designed for the purpose of encouraging foreigners to emigrate and settle in America, which he calls ‘the asylum of freedom, the cradle of future nations, the refuge of distressed Europeans.’ . . . To check as much as possible the fatal tendency of such publications cannot be an object beneath the attention of the guardians of our laws and liberties.”

There is no doubt that the effect of Crèvecoeur’s book, widely read in all western Europe, did promote emigration, and possibly that may have been its design. But it was rather in a general spirit of philanthropy, which was his most distinguishing trait, that this generous Frenchman wrote it. He was himself surprised at the popularity of his “Letters,” and thus was tempted to continue them beyond his own immediate observations. Even in his first book he used the researches and accounts of others; and this he did more constantly in his final work, the “Journey in Upper Pennsylvania.”

Soon after St. John’s return to New York in 1787, he called on Washington (perhaps at Mount Vernon), and presented him with the new three-volume edition of the French “Letters”; he also sent a copy of the third volume, which was wholly new, to Dr. Franklin at Philadelphia, and the three volumes to Governor Bowdoin, then president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston. These three copies

(or at least the new volume of each) have settled in Boston, — Washington's copy at the Athenæum Library; Franklin's, with his autograph, at the Public Library; and Bowdoin's, at the new home of the Academy in Newbury Street. The letters of St. John to Bowdoin came into the hands of his kinsman, Mr. Winthrop, were read by him to this Society in 1874, and printed in our Proceedings the next year. At that time Bowdoin was interested in paper mills at Milton, and in one of the latest of these letters (February 3, 1787) St. John mentions an infant invention he had seen in France which he hoped Bowdoin would experiment with. It was the treatment of various vegetable fibres chemically so as to convert them into good paper, — a process since brought to great perfection and generally introduced all over the world in the manufacture of wood into paper. St. John wrote: —

“Give me leave to send you a small book, printed on a new invented paper made with the bark of the Tilleul, a specie of the linden; at the end of which you will find also several specimens of other papers, made with a variety of roots, plants and barks, and three sheets with woollen rags. The inventor is but just beginning these useful experiments, and hopes to find out the art of converting into paper every specie of vegetable, and whitening his work with vitriolic acid. I wish these samples may urge your paper-makers at Milton to make some trials, which, in a country where rags are so scarce, cannot but be very important, either for pasteboard, sheathing of vessels, wrapping of sugar, etc.”

In a letter to his patron, the Duc d'Harcourt, written from New York five months later (July 27, 1787), St. John dwells on the energy and opportunities of the United States in developing manufactures. He says: —

“The Americans are beginning to understand that it is not English commerce that enriches them, so much as national manufactures, such as are most suited to their climate and the genius of the people. Necessity, misfortune, the constant flow of gold and silver from the country to pay for English merchandise, have opened their eyes.”

He then goes on to extol the hardy enterprise of the New England and New York people in thus recovering themselves from the losses of the Revolutionary War.

This is one example, out of many, of the steady interest St. John took in the progress of invention. He was early convinced of the feasibility of steam navigation; wrote up

the first efforts of that kind on the Potomac and the Delaware rivers, and followed Fulton in his success on the Hudson. Indeed, like Franklin and Jefferson, his mind seems ever to have been occupied with thoughts for the advancement of science, the arts, and the good of mankind. Upon this philanthropic state of feeling the French Revolution, and its ensuing and long continuing wars, came like a destructive cataclysm. Its after effects were surprisingly good, but its first shock was appalling to men of heart and practical sense like St. John. He favored the abrogation of privilege, but abhorred the excesses of the Jacobins, by which many of his friends suffered death, banishment, or loss of fortune. Protected by his own prudence and the abilities of his son-in-law, Otto, St. John survived the *Culbute Générale*, and lived almost to see the downfall of Napoleon, under whom his son, son-in-law, and granddaughter had taken service. Otto was sent to Munich by Napoleon in 1802, and his father-in-law joined him there in 1806, for three years. This brought him into relations with the artists, men of science, and philosophers of Bavaria, — a small kingdom, then growing in fame, and which had profited much by the genius and industry of a Massachusetts man, Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford. But St. John was then upwards of seventy, and inclining, with all his optimism, to take those dark views which are the worst discomfort of age. His pride was pleased by the attentions of the king, who had read his "American Letters" both in French and English; but he disliked the manners and conversation of the nobles, and preferred the middle class and the people, whom he fairly appreciated.

Having dealt in his first series of "Letters" chiefly with the scenery of the northeastern Colonies and infant States, though he had introduced visits to Carolina and Bermuda, St. John, while weathering the storms of the French Revolution, seems to have thought it proper, in a new series, to take up the condition, natural advantages, and social habits of the Southern and Western States, the Indian tribes, and Canada. He therefore pieced together and began to print at Paris, in 1800, a new three-volume work, to which he gave the title of "A Journey in Upper Pennsylvania," though little of it was devoted to that backwoods country as he had known it. Probably the life of his son Louis as a pioneer in a part of

that region may have suggested this early chapter. But presently he turned to other topics, and told a long story about a Carolina planter, an old man, Mr. Bull by name, who in the later years of our Revolution left his plantation for fear of the tories, and took to the Carolina forest, moving northward and avoiding the army of Cornwallis. St. John professes to have found him near Fincastle, in Virginia, and to have heard from him the details of his gypsy life, with his family and his negroes, from April, 1778, to 1782, after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. They planted crops each year, hunted for game, and fed their cattle and horses on the rich pasturage of the bottom lands. Mr. Bull said : —

“ Alone in the midst of these vast solitudes we had for witnesses of our labor only the sweet, melodious meadow-lark, the jay, the chattering boblincoorn, the tufted starling, the bold king-bird, the shrill whistling cat-bird, and the thrushes with their gentle, harmonious notes. These birds, with the mock-bird, ignorant of the destructive power of man, were constantly about us, and seemed to view us with curiosity rather than terror. Every evening as soon as the sun set, great flocks of cranes rose slowly, in regular and majestic spirals, to a great height, as if to catch the last glimpse of the sun, whose rays sometimes glanced on their whitish wings, and met our eyes as we watched them. They soon came down again in the same order and as silently to the places they had just left. This spectacle occurred almost daily when the sky was clear, and lasted more than half an hour. In this lovely solitude we passed our first winter. I built a spacious, comfortable cabin, at the foot of one of the largest oaks I ever saw ; and in this my two daughters gave birth to the two grandsons whom you see here with me. In memory of their birthplace I gave them the names of Pacolet and Nawassa, the streams at whose confluence I had built my cabin.”

This was near the Broad River, a few miles south of North Carolina ; for the topography of St. John is confirmed by his contemporary, Dr. Morse. The second winter he was near the headwaters of the Yadkin River ; the third near those of the river Dan, not far from a mountain called Ararat. In that region were the Carolina Moravians, at Wachovia, whose chief town, Salem, corresponding to Bethlehem in Pennsylvania, is still inhabited by these pious people. The old Noah of this modern Ararat went on to say : —

“ During the four years of my pilgrimage I think I must have traversed 600 miles, without any of my household being ill a single day, —

so salubrious are our mountains. It was time, however, for peace to be made, and our endurance, our courage and our clothes were getting worn out. Finally, in May, 1782, I returned to my plantation on the Saluda, which two old servants had not been able to protect from pillage. Great was their joy to see us come back in good health, and with an increase in the family of seven children, two white and five black, — together with 54 young cattle.”

I wonder if the annals of South Carolina contain any record of this patriarchal wandering of Mr. Bull with his heifers and mares. Doubtless St. John found it in print somewhere, and translated it, along with his accounts of Hell Gate and Yale College, into his colloquial French. It seems that when his daughter Fanny was in London with her husband, who was negotiating the treaty of Amiens, she tried to get this book of her father accepted by the English trade. She wrote him (October 6, 1800): —

“Several booksellers here showed great eagerness to undertake a translation of your ‘Journey into Upper Pennsylvania,’ — some of them after only hearing the title and the author; others after reading various sheets of the manuscript which we showed them. I am sorry to tell you, however, that they soon changed their opinion when they realized it was not an actual journey but a purely philosophical (ideal) work; which, however well written, was not of a sort to succeed in England.”

It was, in fact, partly real and partly ideal, but very interesting, and, I doubt not, gave Chateaubriand hints for his American novels, which made so much stir soon after. However, it was never translated, and few of the Pennsylvanians, Virginians, and New Yorkers named in it ever read it. The New Haven professors ought to read the account of their college, and of the wonderful dinner-parties of Tutor Woodhull. As an observer, St. John was quite as vivacious, if not always so exact as Thoreau.

This work, prepared for publication just before Washington's death, had been dedicated to him, then in retirement at Mount Vernon; and the epistle of dedication recounted the various times at which the author had seen him in the ascending steps of his noble career, — a deputy from Virginia to the Continental Congress of 1774, — chosen generalissimo in 1775, — and laying down his great command in November, 1783, just

after St. John had returned to New York from France, as consul at the ports of New York and New Haven. This friend of Washington said, in a note to his first volume of the work published in 1801, and never yet translated :—

“ I witnessed the general joy, the outbursts of delight which were occasioned by his modest triumphal entrance into New York City, November 25, 1783. I saw his humanity towards the loyalists, whose arrangements for departure were not yet finished ; I admired, as so many did, his moderation, his affability, the wise measures he took to soften the bitterness of party spirit among opponents who, after a separation of seven years, found themselves reunited. I shared with the citizens the sorrow, the regrets, almost the consternation which followed his announcement that his departure for Virginia was fixed for the 4th of December. I mingled with them and with the officers of his army, assembled there for the last farewells. `Never can I forget the last words which he addressed to his companions in arms, from whom he was now to part forever ; never the impression made on me by the imposing dignity of his countenance, and the tone of his voice, affected by the emotion which he strove to suppress.”

St. John also printed in the same volume parts of the letter Washington wrote to him in reply to congratulations on his election to the presidency (April 10, 1789), saying :—

“ A combination of circumstances, a chain of events which I could not foresee, have made it indispensably necessary, as I find, to embark once more on the stormy sea of public affairs. I need not tell you how much this resolution is opposed to my wishes and my dearest inclinations ; all my friends who know me are convinced of this, I trust. If I accept the presidency, it is with the purest intentions. I appeal to the great Searcher of all hearts for this ; He knows whether any object, the most flattering imaginable, or the enticement of any advantage, however seductive, or finally any desire for fame, however easy of attainment, would have decided me, at my age and in my condition, to abandon the quiet path of private life. Assuredly not ; I know too well what happiness is, and the price we pay for it. But if the people of these States believe my services can still be useful to the public, I will give them, since they require it. A hope of this kind can alone repay me for the many sacrifices I must make, in leaving my fireside, and abandoning my repose.”

A portion of this letter, which St. John did not print, is given by his biographer and descendant, showing that St. John had translated for Washington the favorable accounts of

the early days of the French Revolution, with which Washington then sympathized. He wrote to St. John at New York : —

“I am truly glad to see by the translations you have been good enough to send me, that a profound change is taking place in the political opinions of the French people. It would seem that the American Revolution — or else the enlightenment peculiar to this age of the world — has opened the eyes of nearly all the nations of Europe. The spirit of liberty gains ground everywhere ; which is a real occasion for congratulation among all the friends of humanity.”

The reason why St. John did not print this in the consulate of Napoleon is evident ; he no longer looked on the French Revolution, by which he and his friends had greatly suffered, with the admiration felt in 1789. Indeed, in quoting some remarks of his friends of 1800, advising against publishing any more American letters just then, he makes one of them say : —

“Hardly escaped from the chaos and the horrors of one of the most amazing revolutions that ever deluged earth with blood, — still troubled and alarmed at those decrees of exile, confiscation, slavery and opprobrium, from which, as by miracle, the happy genius and courage of a young hero of 31 has just set us free at last, — what interest can we take in the progress of civilization in a country so distant as America ? Wait, then, till the new sun which already illumines the horizon, has reached its meridian ; till the WASHINGTON of France has had time to develop in civil administration the talents he has displayed at the head of armies.”

This faith in the disinterested character of Bonaparte was common about 1800 ; and his coming to a treaty of peace with England, for which St. John’s son-in-law Otto had just paved the way, was an evidence of his good nature.

The new book was, as I have said, partly “philosophic,” or ideal, and partly actual, — a compilation from various writers (St. John included) on the conditions of life in America. With this was mingled something that seems fiction, — the story of a scion of the royal family of Braganza, who became a monk, and had many adventures in Portugal, Holland, and America. It is always a little hard to say when St. John is adhering to the literal truth, though he had almost the

skill of Defoe in making fiction seem like reality. His own account of his reason for writing his first book, the famous "Letters of an American Farmer," appears in a letter to Mme. de Houdetot.

The ten years between St. John's landing in France, in 1790, and his beginning to print his second work in 1800, were troubled and dangerous years for him and most of his earlier friends. Unable to get an extended leave of absence from his consulship, he tried for a pension upon giving up the post; but his patrons were not only out of power, — they were exiles or prisoners, or had died under the wrath of the French people, so long oppressed and persecuted, against the "aristocrats." The Duc de Rochefoucauld had been stoned to death at Gisors; Liancourt had fled to England; and the once powerful and popular Lafayette, whose reception in America was enthusiastically described by St. John in his third volume of 1787, had fled from France and was basely imprisoned in an imperial dungeon. His son, George Washington Lafayette, was met at Mount Vernon by Mr. Latrobe in July, 1797, where he was the emigrant guest of his godfather, while Lafayette languished in prison. Even Otto, who had been secure in the foreign office under Danton's clerk, Deforgues, was himself imprisoned in 1794, and unable to extend protection to his suspected father-in-law. At this crisis St. John found friends in the prosperous banking house of Colonel Swan of Boston, at whose noisy counting-room he used to write his letters, under feigned names and dates, to his sons, "Ally," at Hamburg, in a branch of Swan's bank, and Louis, whom in this year (1794) he had sent off to America to make his way as a pioneer farmer, like his father, thirty years before. From the autumn of 1794 till April, 1796, St. John himself lived near his son in Altoona, a suburb of Hamburg, — James Monroe, who reached Paris as American envoy in the summer of 1794, finding himself too much embarrassed by his delicate situation, after the downfall of Robespierre, to repay to Otto and St. John the services they had rendered him, as they thought.

Returning to Paris in the spring of 1796, St. John found he had been elected a non-resident member of the French Academy, in one of its sections, and met with the members occasionally. Later in that year he joined with Otto in the

purchase of a small estate called Lesches, near Meaux and the river Marne ; and he recalled Louis from America to take part in the farm labors there, while St. John himself remained in Normandy with his aged father, the Marquis, who did not die till 1799, at the age of ninety-two.

At Lesches, which Louis after a while left to join the French armies in Italy and Switzerland, St. John edited his second work, already cited and quoted ; with his son William Alexander (married in 1798 to a lady of Normandy) residing on the estate for a time ; while his son-in-law Otto had gone to Berlin as secretary to Sieyès, ambassador to Prussia. The task of printing his voluminous work was a vexatious one, and an evidence of this is among the manuscripts in the Boston Public Library, where I found last year (in French) these two autograph notes from St. John to his publisher, Citizen Maradan, bookseller, Rue Pavée S. André-des-Arts, No. 16, finding fault with the printer, Crapelet, and dated "28 Brumaire," — I suppose, 1800. They ran thus : —

"I am in receipt, Citizen, of the nine sheets of the impression, which you have just sent me, and also of your letter of the 25th. Of these nine sheets you had already given seven for M. Otto nearly two months ago ; the two others were revised (*comparées*). It is clear, then, that there has been a total interruption of the printing during these two months ; since, if you had had more sheets you would have sent them. On the other hand, Citizen Crapelet cannot say that he has ceased to work for lack of copy, since at the same period I sent to Paris four chapters with their notes, as well as the 18 first chapters, which are very considerable, — also the *cours préliminaire*, the dedication and the notes thereto. This interruption having passed under your eye, I do not wish to speak of it, since it concerns you more than me. . . . The 3d volume will have at least 26 sheets (of 16 pages each). As to Citizen Tardieu (who engraved the maps and cuts), M. Bonfils has been to see him. I will correct the maps as soon as I have received them."

Later he wrote to Maradan : —

"The six copies received. I learn with pleasure that the work will at last be announced. I yesterday saw M. Laboly, who bade me ask you to send him a copy to-day, seeing that the Decade day comes soon, he would have it before then. He is going to speak to Messrs. Suard and Fontane, and is much disposed to think well of the book. He is a warm friend, who ought not to be neglected."

After Otto's recall from England, by an intrigue of Talleyrand, once more in the foreign office under Napoleon, the First Consul sent him to Bavaria, to represent him in that then friendly country, at Munich. St. John, as already said, joined his son-in-law there in 1806, and at once, as in other countries where he dwelt or visited, fell into good society and saw famous persons. Maximilian the Elector, who had made himself king, told him with what pleasure he had read the "American Farmer's Letters" and invited him to dinner. It was not in the court circle, however, but among the men of science, with whom Count Rumford had lived familiarly years before, that St. John found himself most at home. He admired the aptitude of the Bavarians for art and the sciences, in which they have since become so distinguished. "There is here in Munich," he wrote, "an endowment of talent, which only needs a corresponding endowment of research to show itself highly productive. I have taken the liberty to speak to the king about this as often as with propriety I could do it." The results are now seen everywhere in Bavaria.

Although Count Rumford had left Munich long before St. John resided there, he was living and in Paris, where he had married the termagant widow of Lavoisier, the French chemist. In September, 1809, after St. John's return to Paris, or rather to Sarcelles, he wrote to his son's widow some gossip of Paris concerning this ill-assorted pair. The Bavarian envoy had dined with the Otto family the Sunday before, and St. John writes: —

"Somehow or other, in a rambling conversation, mention was made of the quarrel, — what am I saying? the open war of M. Rumford with Mme. Lavoisier, his spouse, — a war that has long been the inexhaustible source of gossip for the salons of Paris. Nobody better than the Bavarian envoy to speak knowingly about it; for he, jointly with M. Marbois, has been the pacificator of the endless and scandalous quarrels of the two belligerents. At last peace was made. They had separated, these two beings who never should have united. The strife had reached such a degree of violence that Count Fouché, the Grand Inquisitor of the Empire, felt compelled to take cognizance of it; and but for the Bavarian envoy's intervention, his iron flail might have descended on the husband's head. This Americo-Anglo-Bavarian not being able to show in any of the upper circles of Paris since the separa-

tion, prudently resolved to retire to Auteuil ; where, like a storm-tost barque just come into port, he was enjoying the rest and quiet his feeble health greatly needed. His friends were congratulating him on it, when it was learned that his former wife had just hired the house adjoining, with the intention of turning the recent truce into a durable peace. She asked that, as the first base of the great work, she might have permission to open a gateway between their two adjoining gardens. Just then, alarmed at some distant rumblings, Mme. C. resolved to go back at once to Paris. The sequel in my next number, — or rather at the first dinner Fanny and I shall eat at the Bavarian legation.”

The “sequel ” has disappeared, or was never written. Count Rumford, whose fine bronze statue stands in one of the streets at Munich, outlived St. John by a year, dying in 1814. His daughter, the Countess Sarah, lived and died in Concord, New Hampshire, the home of her mother, the first wife of Colonel Thompson and the daughter of Parson Walker.

Returning to France in 1809, St. John renewed his acquaintance with Mme. de Houdetot, and with Volney, Joel Barlow, and other ante-Revolutionary friends. By this time, too, his granddaughter had grown up and was soon married to a rising man in public affairs, the Baron Pelet de la Lozère, then attached to the Council of State (born 1785, died 1871), and afterwards prefect, deputy, peer, and twice minister of state under Louis Philippe. This marriage occurred in 1812, and proved a fortunate one ; but at that very time occurred the disastrous retreat from Russia, in which Louis St. John, the son, nearly lost his life. He had long been in Napoleon’s army, — in Italy under Massena, and elsewhere, — and now, in 1812–1813, he was subjected to the horrors of the battle of Beresina and the winter retreat to Wilna in Poland. Writing to his father from Leipzig (March 10, 1813), Louis said : —

“I am quite well, and all my wounds are healed. I can only thank the Almighty for having so happily escaped the terrible destiny that seemed to await me, especially when I had been stripped by the Cossacks at Wilna. I was in such a state of misery and weakness that I could neither fly nor fight ; and I was incapable of enduring their harsh treatment, had I remained in the power of those barbarians. No wonder I was so reduced ; I had passed many icy nights in the open air without rest or sleep, in fear of freezing. If I closed my eyes for an instant, I opened them without being refreshed, and usually

was waked by hunger. You know, father, that hunger, like sleep, is irresistible; you had occasion to find this out in the American wilderness. I was so horribly wretched, so covered with vermin, my beard of such a length, that I had only a distant resemblance to a human being, as some of my comrades have since told me. For all that, I was never so happy in my life as when I escaped from Wilna. I dragged myself along, half-frozen, without gloves, sticking my hands in my pockets, the only place where they could get a bit of warmth. In such a disaster, everybody thinks only of himself. Had I fallen on the high road, nobody would have stooped to pick me up; and probably I showed myself just as indifferent towards more than one who needed my aid. On the march or in bivouac we were so exasperated by suffering that every one shied off to hide a bad crust of bread that he was secretly gnawing."

When the young officer reached headquarters and communicated his safety, his father said, "This resurrection of Louis has made me ten years younger"; but St. John was already near his end. He died at Sarcelles, in Count Otto's house, November 12, 1813; and, by a continuance of those errors of date which clung to his career through life, he was entered in his death-certificate as eighty-one years old, when in fact he lacked two months and a half of being seventy-nine. Perhaps it was this certificate or his obituary in Paris, which caused some of his biographers to speak of him as born in 1731; others say, 1738; the actual date was January 31, 1735, as stated at the beginning of this paper. His obituary in the "Journal of the Empire" called him eighty-two and spoke of him as "modest even to humility." So he was, and it is rarely a French quality.

At intervals during the century and a quarter since St. John began to be known as an author, under a disguised name, he has been recognized for what he essentially was, — an artless writer, in spite of his many innocent arts to escape personal annoyance; and as true a philanthropist, though not so amply gifted with genius and political wisdom, as his friends Franklin and Jefferson. That singularly rare virtue, unselfish gratitude, was conspicuous in him; and we should hardly have heard of his sufferings on the frontier, in the brutal prison of New York, or among the *sans culottes* of Paris, were it not for the effusion of his thanks to his Quaker friends in Pennsylvania, his loyalist and truly loyal friend William Seaton of

New York, and the *grande*s of France who put him in the way of what was the height of his ambition, — to render useful service to his two countries, America and France, and to benefit the mass of mankind. In doing this, and almost without intending it, he became every now and then an admirable writer. He saw man and Nature clearly and lovingly; he described what he saw in the first language that occurred to him; and as this was untutored, and never imitated, it often had the effect of genius. According to the receipt for good writing which John Brown's "Paddy" unconsciously gave, St. John in his diaries and letters was "afther others, and niver afther himself at all, at all." If he did not, like Brown, rise in high moments into true eloquence, or the conciseness of Thucydides, it was the fault of his two vernaculars, — the diffuse English of the eighteenth century, and the late acquired French prose, which is more favorable to the sententiousness of wit than that of profound wisdom. But even so, his French may outlast, in its best examples, the posing rhetoric of Chateaubriand and all but the highest flights of Danton and Mirabeau. Far inferior in sustained elegance and descriptive charm to the prose of St. Pierre, it has now and then all the unforeseen grace and native strength which authors by profession so often lack.

In the moral virtues St. John seems to have been a model, which can be seldom said of Frenchmen who have not sincerely devoted themselves to religion. His descendant and biographer, Robert St. John de Crèveçœur, a Roman Catholic, says of him : —

"He believed firmly in God and the immortality of the soul; his poetic and enthusiastic spirit adored the Creator in his works; but a long residence among American Protestants had detached him from the true Church, and the railing skepticism of the Houdetot circle at last extinguished the faith of his youth. . . . Profoundly honorable, and devoted to his country, — intelligent and practical in talent, unwearied in bringing things to the use and love of the people; in literature sincere and of good intention; he added to the good fortune of achieving some good in the world, a merit, very rare among his contemporaries, of never doing any harm."

This is rather reserved praise, but it is also deserved, as much of our encomium of our ancestors oftentimes is not, — their chief merit in our eyes being to have made room for ourselves.

St. John has made them better known to their descendants ; and if he has complimented them too highly, as his countrymen sometimes said, it was through his inexhaustible optimism and good nature, which neither the French Revolution nor the approach of old age could quite overcome. This did not prevent him from seeing that evils existed and that they proceeded from evil men. In quoting his account of our backwoodsmen, — “frontiersmen” he calls them, — I shall condense his English pages, and not have recourse here to the later written French version, which in some respects softened the picture. Certainly it did so with regard to slavery in South Carolina, his censure of which will presently be quoted.

St. John could not resist the traveller’s temptation to exaggerate ; but he was clear-headed and practical, and so were his Americans. Take his description of the frontiersman, and see who of the ten thousand lecturers and journalists and novelists of our time could better it, — the type persisting with but slight variations till now, although the frontier of civilization has receded more than a thousand miles.

“Near the great woods in the districts last settled men seem to be placed still farther beyond the reach of government. How can it pervade every corner? Driven there by misfortunes, necessity of beginnings, desire of acquiring large tracts of land, idleness, frequent want of economy, ancient debts, — the reunion of such people does not afford a very pleasing spectacle. When discord, want of unity and friendship, when either drunkenness or idleness prevails in such remote districts, contention, inactivity and wretchedness must ensue. The few magistrates they have are in general little better than the rest. They are often in a perfect state of war, — that of man against man, sometimes decided by blows, sometimes by means of the law, — that of man against every wild inhabitant of these venerable woods. These men appear to be no better than carnivorous animals of a superior rank, living on the flesh of wild animals when they can catch them, and when they are not able they subsist on grain. There, remote from the power of example and check of shame, many families exhibit the most hideous parts of our society [meaning, civilization].”

In spite of the awkwardness of the expressions (for St. John did not write the best English, though often a most effective kind), this is a picture of the backwoodsman, with an explanation of him. Here is no observable optimism, nor in what follows : —

"Eating wild meat, whatever you may think, tends to alter the temper: though all the proof I can adduce is, that I have seen it. Having no place of worship to resort to, what little society this might afford is denied them. As Europeans and new-made Indians, they contract the vices of both. Hunting is but a licentious, idle life, and if it does not always pervert good dispositions, yet when it is united with bad luck it leads to want, and want stimulates that propensity to rapacity and injustice too natural in needy men."

St. John visited Charleston and Georgetown, South Carolina, before the Revolution; he had a distaste for the lawyers there, and was shocked at the slavery. He said:—

"The three principal classes are lawyers, planters and merchants; this is the province which has afforded to lawyers their richest spoils, for nothing can exceed their wealth, power and influence. No plantation is secured, no title is good, no will is valid but what they dictate, regulate and approve. The whole mass of provincial property is become tributary to them; they are more properly law-givers than interpreters of the law, and have united in most of the provinces the skill and dexterity of the scribe with the power and ambition of the prince. Who can tell where this may lead in a future day? In another century the law may possess in the north what now the church possesses in Peru and Mexico. . . .

"The planters get rich; so raw, so unexperienced am I in this mode of life, that were I to be possessed of a plantation and my slaves treated as in general they are here, I never could rest in peace. I should be thinking of the barbarous treatment they met with on shipboard, and finally delivered over to the severities of the whippers and the excessive labors of the field. The planters, bred in the midst of slaves, learn from the example of their parents to despise them, and seldom conceive, either from religion or philanthropy, any ideas that tend to make their fate less calamitous. Nothing but terrors and punishments are presented to them. Death is denounced if they run away; horrid delaceration if they speak with their native freedom, while even those punishments often fail of their purpose."

He then gives an instance of shocking punishment which he says he saw, but which he has exaggerated. As to the general facts, however, he is confirmed by Elkanah Watson, who was there soon after, and by Jefferson in his "Notes on Virginia." He modified this censure in his French edition, because, he said, the success of our Revolution had made slavery milder.

In contrast to this painful censure of a state of things long

since passed away, let me cite what has been till now one of the best known of St. John's English writings, — his account of the Quakers of Nantucket, their ownership of the island, and the simplicity of their habits, in the years before Nelson, then a young lieutenant, made the whale-fishing and candle-making sandbank in the midst of the Atlantic a neutral domain in the War of the Revolution. After describing Nantucket at great length, with an excellent map of its irregularities and peculiarities of shape and name, and another good map of Martha's Vineyard, from which Dr. Franklin's Folger ancestors migrated to Nantucket in the seventeenth century, St. John has this to say of the island Quakers, — their manners, industry, piety, and visiting habits : —

“Idleness is the most heinous sin in Nantucket; an idle man would soon be pointed out as an object of compassion; for idleness is considered another word for want and hunger. The custom of incessant visiting has infected every one. The house is always cleaned before the women set out, and with peculiar alacrity they pursue their intended visit, which consists of a social chat, a dish of tea, and a hearty supper. When the good man of the house returns from his labor he peaceably goes after his wife and brings her home; meanwhile the young fellows, equally vigilant, easily find out which is the most convenient house, and there they assemble with the girls of the neighborhood. Instead of cards, musical instruments or songs, they relate stories of their whaling voyages, their various sea adventures and the different coasts and people they have visited. Puddings, pies, and custards never fail to be produced on such occasions; for I believe there never were any people in their circumstances who live so well, even to superabundance. Thus these young people sit and talk, and divert themselves as well as they can; they often all talk and laugh together, but they are happy. This lasts until the father and mother return, when all retire to their respective homes, — the men reconducting the partners of their affections.”

In this, as in other things, he praises the islanders, and pictures them truly. A writer describing Nantucket in 1807, while St. John was still alive, but after he had returned to France, said : —

“The ‘Letters of an American Farmer’ afford the most interesting and entertaining account of this island. However, two objections may be made. His pictures, though striking likenesses, are always flattering likenesses; every face glows with the blush of sensibility, and is irradiated with the beams of happiness. The other objection is that he is

frequently erroneous in minute and unimportant circumstances. He gives the contour and character of the face exactly, though in too favorable a light; but he makes strange mistakes in the sleeve of a coat or the strap of a shoe. With good nature enough to pardon these two faults the reader will peruse the Letters of St. John with perpetual delight."

St. John further contrasts the two islands with each other:—

"The people of Nantucket are indebted for all their advantages not only to their natural genius, but to the poverty of their soil. As a proof, look at the Vineyard, their neighboring island, which is inhabited by a set of people as keen and sagacious as themselves. But their soil being in general extremely fertile, they have fewer navigators; though equally well situated for the fishing business."

St. John lived to see the whale-fishery of Nantucket and New Bedford introduced into France under the auspices of the French government; but it did not attain there the success that New England found in it.

In preparing this account of a man too little known, I have been much indebted to Mr. S. O. Todd, of St. Johnsbury Centre, through whom the American public, by the aid of Dr. Robert Turner, of Paris, have been brought into communication with the representatives of the St. John family in Paris. These are the widow of Robert St. John, Mme. Marie de Crèveçœur, and her three children, of whom the eldest is Lionel de Crèveçœur, through whose kindness the engraving of Pine Hill farm has been obtained.

Other papers which had been prepared for presentation at this meeting were postponed on account of the lateness of the hour.

Incidental remarks were made during the meeting by the PRESIDENT and Messrs. JAMES DE NORMANDIE, GAMALIEL BRADFORD, FRANKLIN B. SANBORN, SAMUEL A. GREEN, and MELVILLE M. BIGELOW.

A new serial, containing the record of the December meeting, and the Catalogue of the Waterston Collection were ready for delivery at this meeting.